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THE

J A C Q U E R I E.

VOL. III.

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THE
JACQUERIE;

OR,

THE LADY AND THE PAGE:

An Historical Romance.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

“THE GIPSY,” “THE ROBBER,” “THE GENTLEMAN OF THE
OLD SCHOOL,” ETC. ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

JACQUERIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE glorious summer had come back again, calling back out of the earth the flowers and leaves, spreading over the sky the sunshine and the blue, and giving back to the choristers of nature cheerfulness and song — as we may suppose the dawning of another life will do to the heart, which has been chilled in the wintry grave, restoring to it the bright objects of love and affection lost upon earth, giving the sunshine of faith, and the blue sky of peace, and drawing from the spirit the melodious voice of praise.

It was in the early morning, somewhere to-

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wards the hour of six, and the slanting sun, like hope in youth, brightened all the salient objects in the picture, and promised a long course of glory and of brightness. The heart of him that looked upon the glittering scene around beat in glad response to its aspect, as, keeping his horse at a quick pace during the freshness of the morning, a young cavalier, mounted upon a strong destrier or charger, trotted gaily along through the hilly country, which at that time formed the frontier of France on the side of Lower Lorraine. Like every one else in those days he rode fully armed, though the steel panoply by which he was covered was in a great measure concealed by a surcoat of arms, presenting a silver ground, traversed by a broad stripe, called a bend dexter, in deep blue, bearing on the centre of the breast, technically the fess point, a heart embroidered in red. The cavalier was stout and tall, a light mustachio fringed his upper lip, and the hair, which was suffered to appear by a velvet cap replacing the helmet that hung at his saddlebow, curled in profuse masses over his neck

and shoulder. His complexion was browned by exercise and exposure; and upon his cheek and brow appeared more than one deep scar, telling of blows boldly met, and probably as vigorously returned. As he gazed round him, there was an air of glad hilarity in his face, and in all his bearing, which spoke a heart full of hope and joy. One perceived it in the light touch of his left hand upon the bridle; one marked it in the half-suspended position of the right; one saw it in the bright sparkling of his clear hazel eye, in the thrown back head, the expanded chest, and the smiling curl of the lip, as the varied thoughts chased each other through his busy mind.

That young cavalier was Albert Denyn, returning to his native land, after his first campaign under the glorious leading of the Capital de Buch; and to say sooth, though there were manifold feelings in his bosom which combined to give that joyful air to his whole person, the surcoat of arms which we have said he wore was not amongst the least important causes of the gladness which sparkled on his countenance.

He had gone forth with no right to any other garment than that of the serf; he came back clad in the coat of arms which he had won from a grateful prince by his own merits; and the feelings which had given him energy to win that garb were now his chief recompence in wearing it.

In every faculty of the mind and body, Albert Denyn had expanded, if we may use the term, since last we saw him; and all those faculties had been directed to win high renown by an eager and enthusiastic spirit prompted to vast exertions by the strong love which we have already seen working at his heart.

I believe that the portion of earthly greatness which men acquire is regulated as much by the strength of the passions which prompt them as by the powers of their minds. The passions, in short, are the main springs which move the watches of the world, the principles are the pendulums or balances which regulate the movements, the talents are the wheels which carry on the action. But, alas! the human kind but little appreciates a correct result, and the

strength of the main spring too often obtains more admiration in the world than the nice adaptation of those principles which regulate its movement. It is sad, it is very sad, to think that the meed of fame, of power, and of success, is more frequently assigned to the action of strong passions than to the operation of great intellect. The ambition that carried forward Napoleon Buonaparte raised him above La Place in the estimation of the world, because La Place was without any strong passion to direct his efforts on those roads where power and fortune are to be gained; but who can doubt, that traces calmly the course of the one and the other, where the greatest mind, the greatest soul, resided?

That man whose passions are so strong as to trample upon all restraint, to cast behind him virtue and remorse, and to use his talents solely for the gratification of his predominant desire, whatever that desire may be, has a field open before him, from which the man of stronger principles is excluded; and though his success will often depend as much upon accident as

upon his own efforts, yet he will acquire, either in fortune or misfortune, the renown of great enterprises, which is the most dazzling of all tinsel in the eyes of the world.

It must be acknowledged, that although Albert Denyn was possessed of great natural energies of mind and activity of body ; although he was brave to a fault, quick, skilful, talented ; though he had genius for every thing which in that age led to greatness ; nevertheless he owed his prompt and rapid success to the eager impetuosity, the resolute and unconquerable perseverance which was given by the presence of a strong master passion in his heart. Love, with him, was as one of those generals, whom we have heard of, who have still conquered by their own energy, when every one around deemed success impossible ; who when repelled at one point still attacked at another, and whose fire gave courage and energy to every part of the army that surrounded them.

Thus, during the time that he had followed the captal in his expedition against the pagans of Prussia, and in various other accidental enter-

prises which presented themselves, and were never neglected by that great adventurous leader, the thought of Adela de Mauvinet, the hope of justifying her regard, of winning renown which might reach her ears, and of gratifying her heart by his own success, seemed to give him eyes for opportunities that other people overlooked, and to endow him with resolution, endurance, courage, and activity, which he might never have displayed in the same degree, had not that strong motive been ever present to his thoughts.

We will not pause upon all that took place during the period of his absence. That period was but brief, it is true; but those were days in which great events and strange adventures crowded themselves into a narrow space, and jostled each other, if we may so term it, upon the highways of life. We have instances of men sharing in the great victory of Cressy, in the north of France, and aiding to conquer the Saracens in the south of Spain, within six weeks; and the Captal de Buch was not one to let his sword slumber in the scabbard,

whenever there was an occasion of drawing it with honour. As he went towards the north, he aided several of the princes of Germany in the wars which were then raging; and as he returned, he took service for twenty days with the emperor, and in that short space went through all the hazards, the adventures, and the struggles of a campaign.

Throughout the whole of these proceedings, Albert Denyn had every day some opportunities of distinguishing himself; and indeed it became visible to his own eyes as well as to those of others, that such opportunities were studiously afforded him by the captal. This was the only sign of peculiar favour that the great leader bestowed upon him. At first it made the rest of the band somewhat jealous; but they found that to counterbalance, as it were, the advantage given, the captal was more sparing of reward and praise to Albert than to any other of his followers. He knew that an opening was what the youth desired, and that the honour was the best recompense for his exertions. Thus gradually the stout men-

at-arms became reconciled to see Albert Denyn always chosen as one in any important undertaking; and even more, his success was so continual, his exertions so great, his talents so conspicuous, and his superiority so evident, even to themselves, that they began to acknowledge his right to lead, and to be obeyed, and often wondered amongst themselves, why it was that the captal seemed so niggardly of praise and reward to one who so well deserved it.

Whatever might be the object of the captal in the conduct which he pursued, Albert Denyn himself was well satisfied. There were occasional little traits which showed him that he was both esteemed and loved. More than once, when there was a difficulty in procuring quarters, his leader made him sleep in the same chamber with himself. On various expeditions, he invited him to sit down to meat with him, and sent him the cup out of which he drank. At other times, too, when they were alone together, Albert would see the captal's eyes rest upon him with an expression of thoughtful interest, which was not to be mistaken; and all these signs showed

him, that neither the silence which his leader maintained regarding his successes, nor the severity with which he put him upon every service of danger, difficulty, or fatigue, was any indication of want of regard and care. He felt, moreover, that by this very conduct the captal was effecting for him the greatest of all objects, rendering him a hardy and experienced soldier in the shortest possible time.

If the captal was niggardly of praise, there were others who were not so; and several of the princes whom the wandering band of soldiers aided for the time, distinguished the youth greatly, both by applause and rewards. He bore away from one a rich casque; from another a splendid sword; another gave him a jewel of much value; another bestowed upon him a golden chain; and at length, the emperor himself called him forth, while the captal was sitting at meat with him, and asked what he could do to reward his gallant efforts in defence of the empire.

“He is as brave a youth, sir emperor,” the captal replied, “as ever drew a sword, and

there is nothing that you can do for him of which he will not show himself as worthy as any knight in all the land."

The emperor gazed upon him for a moment from head to foot, and then said, "Take the cup, young man, and give me to drink."

Albert approached the high officer who held the golden hannap on the monarch's right hand; but the German noble hesitated for a moment to give him the cup, till the emperor signified his pleasure again, by an inclination of the head. He then suffered Albert to take the hannap, while he himself filled it with wine; and bending his knee, the youth offered it to the German sovereign, who took it with a smile, saying, "Do you know what this means, good youth? — It means that, noble or not noble heretofore, you are so from this moment. Go to our heralds, and bid them give you a coat of arms, and take this cup with which you have served me for your fee."

Had the monarch bestowed on him half his treasury, the gift would not have been so great to Albert Denyn; and gladly he accom-

panied the capital on his way back towards France, bearing with him feelings changed, indeed, hopes raised, prospects widened, expectations excited; but having still the same principles warm at his heart, the same passion strong in his bosom.

I have said his hopes were raised. Do not let my meaning be mistaken: the hopes that were entertained by Albert Denyn were of a kind difficult nowadays to be conceived, and belonged entirely to the age he lived in and its chivalrous spirit. Far, far different were they from the warm and glittering hopes, which — like the beams of the summer sun — pervade the universe of the human heart, cheering, brightening, vivifying all things. In comparison with these, they were pale and cold, like the reflected light of the moon, shining brightly, it is true, upon some objects, but throwing long, dark shadows, too, upon those spots where the rays could not penetrate.

His hopes never reached to, never even approached, the very thought of winning her he loved for his own. What though he might

now call himself noble ; what though he might now be entitled to move in the same society as herself, yet he was well aware that there was no earthly chance of him, who had been but yesterday a serf, ever being considered worthy of one descended from a long line of glorious ancestors. The vision would have been a vain one, and, knowing that it must be so, he limited his highest expectations, and his most enthusiastic hopes, to the joy of showing her whom he loved — and by whose heart, he too well knew, he was loved in return — that he was worthy of that higher happiness of which he dared not even dream. Such hopes, indeed, he did entertain, and they were sufficient to make his return joyful.

There was something, too, in re-entering his native land — in crossing the frontier from a foreign state — in pronouncing the word France — and in feeling himself surrounded by all the bright associations which are gathered together for almost every man within the circle of his country, that added to his happiness ; so that, perhaps, that moment, in which we have

depicted him returning from the far north of Germany to the land of his birth, was the brightest that he had known since first he had learned what it is to love.

Albert Denyn was glad that he was alone; for he could indulge his thoughts and his feelings without any eye to mark the changes which they might produce in his demeanour. He had sought, indeed, for the opportunity of preceding the captal by a few days in their return to France; and, though his leader remonstrated upon the risk of passing alone through a country which had been, when they had left it, very nearly in a state of anarchy, Albert Denyn had pressed his request, and had been accordingly charged by the captal, with letters and messages to the King of Navarre, one of the most extraordinary, though, unfortunately, not one of the most virtuous, personages of his day.

The young man-at-arms now rode on confident in success, and we may say, also, conscious of strong powers of body and of mind; and certainly, as he looked round him and saw a well cultivated country, and a con-

tented peasantry, his eye lighted upon nothing to create apprehension or diminish his joy at re-entering his native land. Situated upon the extreme frontier of France, and under the rule of great barons who had mingled but little in the desolating contest between France and England, the district which he was traversing had suffered comparatively little from the scourge of war. The desolating bands which had visited the other parts of France had not ventured thither; and the poor man sitting before his door, or the merry host of the little inn, hanging up the garland upon the tall pole that gave notice of his vocation, spoke of peace and security, which went calmly and pleasantly to the heart of the wayfarer.

It was about six o'clock in the evening when Albert Denyn reached the small village of Orny, just upon the frontier of Champagne and Burgundy; and as his horse was tired by a long day's journey, he looked round him for some place of rest for the night. Inns were naturally more scarce in those days than they are at present, and were rarely to be found, except in

great towns, or situated at certain distances from each other upon the most frequented high roads. There were, indeed, smaller places of accommodation, where the foot-passenger, or the peasant who drove his cattle to some neighbouring fair or market, could obtain repose and food, in almost every considerable village ; but these auberges were seldom frequented by the traveller on horseback, and, indeed, were at one time prohibited from receiving him. The adventurous man at arms, however, the knight, or the leader of a troop, was very rarely unable to find lodging and refreshment. Hospitality was a chivalrous duty, and perhaps one of the most generally practised. Occasionally, indeed, the great lord, the baron of the neighbouring castle, the châtelain in his manoir, set at nought all the principles of knighthood, and exercised his hospitality in a very unpleasant manner : but there was no medium ; and the traveller who had any claim, however small, to distinction, was sure either to be received and entertained with joy and liberality, or plundered, and perhaps murdered into the bargain.

Albert Denyn, however, had no inclination to try the welcome of the castle, if he could find food and rest any where else; and he gazed inquiringly round the little village green, on the one side of which stood the church, and on the other a small but neat-looking house, with a little piece of vineyard attached to it, which he judged might be either that of some peasant well to do, or that of the curate of the parish. He was soon led to conclude that the latter was the case, by perceiving an elderly man in the habit of a priest crossing over from the church with a slow step and eyes bent down upon the ground, and approaching the door of the house after having passed through the little vineyard.

Albert Denyn had not been taught to philosophise, or to enter deeply into the metaphysics of the human character; but to some men it is natural to take keen and rapid note of the various peculiarities in the appearance and demeanour of others, and to apply them as keys to read the inmost secrets of the heart. It is done almost unconsciously: we arrive at a

judgment scarcely knowing how at the time ; and it requires thought, and the act of tracing back our course step by step, before we can tell how we came to the conclusion which we have reached.

Such was the case with Albert Denyn : it was a part of his nature to mark instantly each trait in the bearing of others ; and the habit had been still more strongly grafted in his mind during his service with the captal, whose keen and observant character had its influence on all who were long near him. Thus, as Albert's eye rested on the priest while crossing the small piece of vine, and remarked that the good old man neither turned to the right or left, neither paused to examine whether the flower of his vineyard was going on prosperously, nor halted to look at some particular plant upon his path—for each man has his favourite, even in a vineyard—but walked silently on, with his eyes fixed heavily on the ground beneath his feet—as he marked all this, the young man said to himself, “ The good father has something heavy at his heart, not to notice the things in which he usually takes pleasure. I must disturb

him, however, to know where I can rest to-night ;” and riding up to the vineyard just as the priest was opening the door of his cottage, he said, “ Your blessing, my father !”

“ You have it, my son,” replied the priest, raising his eyes for the first time. “ What would you farther ?”

“ I would merely know,” replied Albert Denyn, “ if there be any place near, where I can lodge for the night ?”

The priest gazed in his face for a minute or two inquiringly, and then, as if satisfied with what he had seen, replied, “ Yes, my son, for the night you can lodge here : there is no other place within four leagues of this village, and you seem tired ; but, alas ! I can only give you lodging for one night, for I must hurry afar myself to other scenes, whence, perhaps, I may never return.”

“ Rest for the next six hours,” answered Albert Denyn, “ is all that I require, good father. On the morrow, too, I must wend forward on my way ; and, indeed, were it not that my beast is weary, I would willingly go some leagues farther to-night.”

“ It is a noble beast,” said the priest, looking at the horse, “ and seems to bear you well. You will find a stable at the back of the house : there is room for him beside my mule : I will go in, and bid the maid prepare you some supper.”

Albert Denyn took round his horse to the stable which the priest had mentioned, and, as every good man would do, cared fully for the accommodation of his dumb companion before he thought of his own. He then returned, and lifted the latch of the cottage door, which at once gave him admission, for no bolts and bars were there to keep out a marauder from the humble abode of the village curate. The room in which Albert found the good priest was a neat but simple chamber, with one or two wooden stools, a small table in the midst, and one at the side, which supported three books, a missal, a volume of homilies, and a Bible, in the ordinary Latin translation of the Roman church. Above the whole rose an oaken crucifix, with the figure of the expiring Saviour, sculptured, not amiss, in the same wood. Upon it the eyes of the priest were fixed when Albert entered the room,

bearing in them a peculiar expression, which the young soldier afterwards recollects, and easily interpreted when once he had got the key to his companion's feelings: that expression, though it had much humble piety in it, had much questioning meditation: it seemed to ask of the Saviour, "Thou who didst die to give peace to mankind, thou who art God as well as man, how is it that, notwithstanding thy ineffable love and mighty power, the same fearful passions, the same acts of blood and crime, disgrace that race for which thou hast made so awful a sacrifice?"

The supper was soon served after Albert entered the room; and the good man blessed the meal, but ate little himself, while the sadness which appeared in his whole countenance and manner gradually communicated itself to his younger companion, and quenched the temporary gaiety with which he had returned to his native land. Albert longed to question his new acquaintance as to the cause of his care or sorrow, but he did not dare to do so openly; for reverence towards age, and respect for the

sacred character of the priesthood, had been early implanted in his mind ; and in those days it was neither a mode nor a custom to hold lightly every venerable institution. He approached the subject, however, saying, “ Which way do you travel, good father, to-morrow, for I am journeying on into France, and perhaps may afford you some protection by the way ? ”

“ I am going towards Paris, my son,” replied the priest ; “ but I fear that a single arm would be but of very little avail against those who might be disposed to molest me.”

“ In some cases certainly but little,” rejoined Albert Denyn ; “ but there are other circumstances in which it might not prove so inefficient, good father. If it be the adventurers that you fear, they were as often to be found, when I left France, in bands of three or four, as in bands of fifty or sixty.”

“ And you think you could protect me against any three or four,” said the priest with a slight smile.

“ I would do my best at least,” answered Albert Denyn, the colour mounting in his cheek

— “ I would do my best, good father, and I have seen some service.”

“ Your countenance speaks it, my son,” replied the priest, looking at the scars which we have mentioned, on the young man’s cheek and brow, “ and willingly will I accept your company, and protection, if you go towards Paris. But you are very young to have seen much service. In what wars have you borne arms? You could not have been at Poitiers ?”

“ Not till the battle was over,” said Albert Denyn. “ But I went to the field shortly after to seek for my lord, who was supposed to be dead. Since then,” he continued, “ I have served with the noble Captal de Buch.”

“ What then !” exclaimed the priest with a start, “ you are not a Frenchman !”

“ Nay,” rejoined Albert, “ I am a Frenchman altogether, and have never borne arms against my country. But I have been fighting under the captal’s banners for the emperor and some of the princes of Germany, and also in company with the Teutonic knights, against the pagans of Prussia.”

“ That, at all events, is a noble cause,” replied the priest ; “ but you may chance to meet with worse than pagans here, my young friend. Yet I will willingly take your escort ; for many of the bands of revolted peasants separate into parties of four and five, and I cannot but think that the arm of one gentleman, such as yourself, is at all events equal to those of four or five villeins.”

The blood mounted again into the cheek of Albert Denyn as he recollected how short a time he had possessed a right to bear the honourable name which the priest gave him, and how lately the contemptuous epithet applied to the peasantry might as well have been used to designate himself.

“ I really do not know, father,” he answered, “ but I will do my best to protect you ; yet I cannot but think, that amongst the peasantry of every country there are as strong arms, as brave hearts, and as high spirits as amongst the nobles. We see that it is so in England, where there are no such class as that of villeins ; and, doubtless, it would be the same with the peasants of France if they had the same advantages.”

The priest gazed at him with a look of dark surprise, and, after a moment's silence, exclaimed, "You astonish me! — But you have been long out of France, my son, and you do not know what has happened here, what is happening every day in this land of our birth. You have not heard of all the horrors that have been perpetrated within the last three months."

"No, no," cried Albert Denyn, with no slight surprise and apprehension, as many an incident in the past recurred to his mind — seeds which might now be producing sad and terrible fruits for the nobility of France. "No, no, I have heard nothing! No news has reached me from my native country since I quitted it in the autumn of last year."

"Then," said the priest, "there is a mournful tale to be told, and perchance the news may come sadly to your own heart; the peasantry, oppressed as perhaps they really were, suffering as they certainly were, have risen in Beauvoisis, have spread over Picardy, and, as it were, mad with sorrow and endurance, are now committing, in their frenzy, crimes that

will shut them out from the support of all good men, from the mitigation of their woes and wrongs, and from the attainment of the very ends they aim at. But, in the mean while, all is giving way before them ; castle after castle has been taken ; towns have been stormed ; the most dreadful massacres have been committed ; blood, desolation, and destruction, are spreading over the whole face of France ; and those whom honourable warfare had spared, and the sword of the marauder had not yet reached, are falling by thousands under the scythes and the flails of these wild madmen."

" But they must have a leader," exclaimed Albert Denyn : " have any of the nobles joined them, or the townspeople ? "

" None of the nobles," replied the priest, " and but few of the communes as yet ; but it would appear that the latter will soon give them too terrible help. In the mean time they are led by a fiend incarnate, whose heart Satan must possess entirely, for he has endowed his brain with talents which are but used for the purposes of desolation and destruction. No

one seems to stand before him, no power has been found capable of opposing him ; and with the rude and unpractised hands of peasantry he has accomplished enterprises that would have set regular armies at defiance."

" What is his name ?" exclaimed Albert Denyn, starting up with a degree of emotion, which the good priest did not understand, though the reader perhaps may. " What is his name, good father ?"

" His name is William Caillet," replied the priest : " do you know him ?"

But before the last words were uttered, Albert Denyn had drawn his sword from the scabbard, and holding up the cross of the hilt before his eyes, as was very common in the oaths of that day, he exclaimed, " God give him to my sword, as I swear never to use it, except in self-defence, or for the protection of the wronged, against any other than him and his, till he or I be dead !"

" Amen," said the priest ; " and God's blessing go with you, young man ! But tell me more of this business : you seem to have been acquainted with this fiend in former days."

“ I was ! I was !” replied Albert Denyn, “ and I know to what his infernal schemes tend.”

As he spoke, and the thought presented itself to his mind of all the consequences towards Adela de Mauvinet and her noble father, which the successes of William Caillet might produce, a wild feeling of anxiety and alarm took possession of him, and he exclaimed, “ Would that the captal were here ! — What shall I do ? — Where shall I find men ? — In Beauvoisis, you said, good father ; in Beauvoisis and Picardy ; not in Touraine ? ”

“ All over France, my son,” replied the priest : “ the malady is more or less raging in every part of the country, though most powerfully in Picardy and the Beauvoisis. But come, you are much moved ; tell me your history, and perhaps I can counsel you as to your future conduct. After that, we will pray God to give us health and sleep, in the trust that he will guide, guard, and deliver us.”

CHAP. II.

By daylight on the following morning, Albert Denyn and the priest were on their way towards Paris; but the countenance of the young cavalier had lost all the gaiety which it had presented on the preceding day; and the traces of deep anxiety were to be marked in every line, as he rode on discussing eagerly with his companion all the events which had taken place in France during the preceding winter. It seemed that he could never hear too much of the progress of the Jacquerie. He asked question after question, then paused for a moment to meditate, till some new inquiry suggested itself to his mind; and, although his fellow-traveller gave as distinct answers as he could, all seemed unsatisfactory, leaving a cloud of doubt and trouble on his countenance, which no explanation from the good priest could remove.

The truth is, that he found the nobility of France—the warrior class of a warlike nation—those who had affected peculiarly to themselves the right of bearing arms and waging battle—had been struck with a general panic by the rising of the peasantry, and, instead of making one powerful effort to crush the insurrection, had offered their throats, as it were, to the butchers, who had slain them with merciless determination. He asked himself what could be the cause of this conduct? Was it—as Caillet had so boldly asserted not long before—was it, that these men were really cowards, and that their courage only consisted in vain boasts and idle pretences? or was there something in the sense of the oppression that they had exercised towards the peasantry, which weighed down their arms, and took the spirit from their hearts?

Such were some amongst the questions that Albert Denyn asked himself; but he knew not one half of the circumstances which combined to paralyse for a time the power of the nobility of France, and to render the fiery courage which

they undoubtedly possessed utterly unavailing against the unarmed multitudes of peasantry by whom they were assailed. The young soldier was not aware that universal disunion reigned amongst the higher classes, that it was difficult to find three gentlemen in all France who were striving for the same object, acting upon the same principles, or directed by the same views, that during the absence and the imprisonment of the king, the whole realm was torn by contending factions, the capital itself in a state of insurrection against its legitimate prince, and each separate castle throughout the country tenanted by those who differed from the inhabitants of the neighbouring one in every principle and every purpose, and were often in actual warfare with them.

The sense of common danger had not yet convinced the nobles of the necessity of even temporary union; and, consequently, though the ravages of the peasantry spread consternation amongst them, yet each saw his neighbour butchered without making an effort to help him, and often laughed at the fate of his enemy, when

the same knife that had murdered him was well nigh at his own throat.

All these things, however, Albert Denyn had still to learn, and the facts that he saw, without comprehending the causes, at once perplexed, surprised, and dismayed him. Still, amongst the crowd of vague and anxious thoughts which hurried through his brain, there were fears and doubts respecting the fate of the house of Mauvinet, which made his heart sink. He knew that it had been the intention of the count to visit his territories in the north of France, though he tried to console himself with the hope that, as the year had been far advanced when he left Touraine, the purpose of the Lord of Mauvinet might have been delayed in execution, and that he and his household might have remained in a part of the country where the insurrection of the peasantry was not so general, and where the strength of his dwelling-place would enable him to set such foes at defiance.

The good priest marked the trouble of his young companion's mind, and sought as far as

possible to give him relief; but although Albert had afforded him some insight into his previous history, he did not completely comprehend all the deep anxiety that the young soldier felt; for there were parts of his connection with the house of Mauvinet which to no living ear would Albert Denyn have uttered for the wealth of worlds, and those were more especially the parts which gave poignancy, almost to agony, to the apprehensions which he entertained.

Of the Lord of Mauvinet himself the priest could tell nothing; he had some vague recollection of that nobleman having been amongst those summoned to hold council with the regent in Paris; and certainly he had not heard his name mentioned as one of those who had suffered from the ravages of the peasantry; but, nevertheless — although he saw that the young soldier was more deeply interested in the fate of that nobleman than was usual with any dependent of a noble house — yet he was forced to admit that he himself might have been murdered and his castle destroyed, with-

out the tidings reaching that part of the country.

“ It was more than three weeks,” he added to what he had been saying on the subject, “ before the unfortunate news which now takes me to Paris found its way to my dwelling, though ‘tis but a two days’ journey.”

“ May I ask,” said Albert Denyn, “ what is the nature of your errand, good father? I have seen that you were sad — very sad; but I did not like to inquire the cause till you alluded to it yourself.”

“ There is no secret in it, my son,” replied the priest; “ but though sympathy is a soothing thing, I did not mention the occasion of my grief, because I believe that we have no right to load others with the burden of our sorrow, unless they themselves seek to share it. I will tell you the story, however, to-night at our first resting-place, if we reach one in safety; but the tale is somewhat long, and might bring tears into my eyes.”

Albert pressed him no farther, but rode on conversing with the good old man of other

matters, and remarking from time to time the changes which became apparent in the face of the country. After pursuing their journey for about two hours, every thing indicated that they were entering those districts which for the last three months had been a scene of continued strife and confusion. Here and there a smoking ruin was to be seen, sometimes of a village, sometimes of a castle. All the small towns through which the road passed were fortified and barricaded at each end, in the best manner that the inhabitants could devise. No man was met altogether unarmed, except in the very smallest hamlets; and, at the first sight of Albert Denyn's crest and plume, the shepherds in the fields, unless two or three were together, set off running towards the nearest wood, leaving their sheep in charge of the dogs. The stumps of fruit trees, which had been cut down and used for firing, in those parts of the country where no forests were near, showed the lawless recklessness of the bands which had swept the land during the winter; and in many places fields, untilled

and unsown, but rank with weeds and wild grass, told a terrible tale of depopulation and despair.

A little before sunset the two travellers rode up the gentle slope of a hill, from the summit of which they perceived a wide plain, slightly undulating and marked by long lines of light and shade, as the sweeps of the ground and the masses of distant woods caught or obstructed the rays of the declining sun. The golden light of evening was in the sky, and spread more or less over the whole scene, mingling even with the blue shadows, and giving them a warmer and a richer hue. In the foreground, at about a mile's distance, was a village bosomed in elms, with the square spire of the church, new built and white with freshness, rising above the trees and shining bright in the evening sun. Every thing was beautiful, and calm, and peaceful; and it was scarcely possible to conceive that the fierce and cruel passions which were ravaging the rest of France could exercise their virulent activity in so tranquil a scene as that.

It was so, however; and as Albert Denyn and

his companion rode into the village, they found the grass growing in the little street as thick as in a meadow. Several of the houses had been burnt, others were scorched with fire, but had been afterwards extinguished, and the only buildings that seemed to have escaped were the church and the priest's house adjoining.

As they passed by the churchyard, Albert perceived a number of fresh made graves, which told their own sad tale, and he inquired no farther. It was to the habitation of the curate that they now bent their way; and Albert's fellow-traveller knocked some time for admittance without the door being opened, while first a female, and then a male head, examined the wayfarers closely through a window at the side. At length a strong middle-aged man in a priest's garments opened the door, and instantly recognising one of his visitors, exclaimed, "Ah! Monsieur Dacy, is it you?"

"It is, indeed, my good brother," replied the curé. "I have come, with a young friend here, to claim your hospitality for a night; shall we be safe?"

“ Oh yes,” answered the priest, “ quite safe will you be, though I always like to see who it is, before I draw a bolt, that I may be prepared for the worst. Yet those burnt houses at the end of the place, and those fresh graves, are as good as a fortification. If any band of plunderers come, they know by those signs that others have been here before them, and they turn away again for some better booty. You shall be right welcome, my good friend; but how is it, Father Dacy, that you leave your own pleasant village, which has, as I hear, escaped hitherto ?”

“ I will tell you presently,” said the good priest; “ but let us first take care of our beasts.”

The welcome that the travellers received was hearty and kind: the food which the priest set before them was indeed as homely as it well could be; but it was abundant, and the evening passed tranquilly, though the chief topic of conversation during the meal was the sorrows and miseries of the land. Such a subject naturally led the good Curé Dacy to explain the cause of his present journey; and although he

had told Albert that the tale was long, yet the pain that the relation occasioned to himself made him shorten it as much as possible.

“ You know,” he began, addressing the priest of the place, “ that my brother, animated by a more ambitious spirit than I ever possessed, had raised himself high in the world, and had become one of the advocates general of the king.”

“ Had !” exclaimed the priest: “ you speak as if he were so no longer.”

“ Neither is he,” answered the Curé Dacy, “ for he is in a bloody grave. He was one of those bold or brave men who most strongly advised the Duke of Normandy to resist the ambition of the *Prévôt* Marcel ; and with the marshals of Normandy and Champagne drew upon themselves the anger of the whole faction. The great men escaped ; but my poor brother, in passing through the streets with his daughter—just at the time that the bad King of Navarre was haranguing the people in the *Pré aux Clercs*—was attacked by a furious mob, and fled into the shop of a confectioner for safety. The man would willingly have saved him and his child,

and was putting up the boards before the shop to keep the people out; but ere he could do it, three or four leaped up upon the booth where his wares were exposed, and sprang into the inside. My brother defended himself well with a beam he had caught up; his poor child clung to the knees of his assassins, and besought them to be merciful; but, in spite of all they murdered him before her very eyes, and would, most likely, have killed her also, as she lay fainting and deluged with her father's blood, had not Marcel himself come by at that moment, and rescued her from their hands. As soon as she could, she sent messengers to me, beseeching me to come, as speedily as possible; for in the house of the *prévôt* she is without protection, and surrounded by the youth of a wild licentious party, who have as little respect for innocence as they have for law or order. I am hastening, therefore, to Paris, to take her quickly from amongst them, though Heaven only knows whether I shall ever return alive myself, or whether they will suffer her to accompany me."

After the Curé Dacy stopped, Albert Denyn remained for a moment or two in deep thought, while the good priest of the place spoke a few words of comfort to his sorrowing brother. At length, however, the young soldier looked up, and asked, though still with an air of meditation, "Is the King of Navarre, then, still in Paris?"

"Ay, my son," answered Monsieur Dacy; "not only is he in Paris, but he and Marcel rule all there, so that the life of the regent himself is every hour in danger."

"Can he aid," demanded Albert, "in making them give your niece up to you, and in securing your safety and free departure?"

"None so much," replied the priest; "for they report that Marcel is but his tool, and totally dependent upon him."

"Well, then," said Albert Denyn, "perhaps I can help you, more than either I or you expected."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dacy with much surprise; "do you know him, then?"

"No," answered Albert with a smile, "I do

not know him, and cannot well explain to you the whole matter. This much I may say, however, I have letters to him both from the Count de Foix and the noble Captal de Buch, and he is likely to attend to any thing that I may ask."

"God be praised, then," cried the priest, "God be praised for sending you to my assistance, young man; for this King of Navarre is as lawless as any of the other rovers that torture our poor land of France. We are told that his partisans are even more cruel and barbarous than the rest, and as for himself, nothing stays him but the consideration of his own pleasure or his own interest."

"A sweet character, good father," replied Albert Denyn, "but it will be for his own interest to attend to what I say."

"Will it so?" exclaimed a voice very different in tone and accent from any of those which had been yet speaking. All eyes were directed at once to the low narrow door of the small chamber, just behind the back of Albert Denyn. It had been left ajar to give air to the room, which was close and hot; and it

was opening as Albert turned his head, presenting a sight that made him instantly rise, front the door-way, and without farther ceremony draw his sword from the sheath.

“Put up, put up your sword,” said the voice which had just spoken, and at the same moment a person entered the room, completely armed except the head, and having nothing in his hand but a leading staff, while a page followed with his helmet, and two or three men at arms were seen looking over his shoulder. He was somewhat less than the middle size, but formed with wonderful grace, and his countenance was as beautiful as it was possible to conceive, somewhat effeminate, indeed, in features, and gentle in expression. The tone of his voice, too, harmonised perfectly with the rest, being peculiarly melodious and soft; and there was even a degree of languor in his sleepy dark eye, which gave the idea of a character and disposition very different from those of the turbulent, ruthless, wily person, who now stood before the young soldier and his companions. “Put up your sword, young

gentleman," he said, "for you can do nothing with it: we are many, and you are few."

"Very true," replied Albert Denyn; "but few have often done much against many, and, therefore, I do not put up my sword until I know what is your purpose, fair sir.—Neither will it be very safe," he added, "to advance another step farther, till you have explained that purpose."

"It is quite peaceable," answered the stranger, regarding the youthful man-at-arms with a smile. "The truth is, that having ridden somewhat late, my horses being tired, and my men in need of repose, I have come hither to seek a night's lodging, without the intention of hurting any one—no not even the good priest who was giving me so high a character but now. I shall take no notice of his words, let him rest assured."

"Doubtless your grace will not," said Albert Denyn; "for, to an honourable man, a thing so overheard must be as if it had never been spoken."

"Not on that account," replied the King of

Navarre, for he it was, “ but because the good priest’s speech suited me well. Every one has his taste in this world, and the character which would please others may not please me. It is a very wholesome and good reputation that I have found in his mouth ; one that I have long sought to establish. No man after that can mistake my views and purposes. He who trusts me is a fool, except it be my interest to keep faith with him. He who fears me is wise, and will take care not to offend me.—Now, good father, see to the lodging of my people, and give me a share of your supper.” Thus saying, he passed by Albert Denyn, and took a seat calmly at the table.

The young gentleman put his sword up into the sheath, and the two priests stood by, gazing for a moment or two upon the King of Navarre and his followers with astonishment, not unmixed with fear. At length, however, the king made an impatient movement with his hand, saying, “ Do as I bid you ! ” and the curate of the place quietly slipped out of the chamber to follow the orders he had received.

“ And now, young gentleman,” continued the King of Navarre, drawing one of the dishes towards him, and loading a clean trencher which happened to stand near with its contents, “ tell me, while I eat my supper, how it may be my interest to attend to what you say? Such I think was your expression just as I entered.”

“ It was so, your grace,” replied Albert Denyn, “ and the reason I made use of such words, was that I bear you letters of some importance from the noble Captal de Buch, who allows me to add that he holds me in some esteem.”

“ That alters the case,” rejoined the King of Navarre, “ and you have said right; I have too high regard for my cousin the captal not to treat with all reverence his messengers.— Besides,” he continued with a laugh, “ whether I regard him or not, the captal can serve me. Where are your letters, young man?— yet keep them,” he added, seeing Albert Denyn put his hand into the bosom of his surcoat. “ I am sleepy to-night; you shall deliver them

to-morrow to me in Paris. I shall set off at four in the morning: you come after quickly, and seek me at the abbey of St. Germain des Près. Bring yon good priest with you, too; and if he have any favour to require at our hands we will grant it him, in consideration of the sweet character that he gave us not long since."

The dark smile which followed the latter part of his speech might well make the good Curé Dacy feel somewhat doubtful of the king's intentions; but Charles the Bad took no farther notice of him during the few minutes that he stayed in the room, finishing his supper quickly, and then betaking himself to sleep in the priest's own bed.

Every one found a place of repose where he could for the night, and early on the following morning the King of Navarre departed, leaving much fewer traces of his visit behind him than was usually the case. Some of his soldiers, indeed, had slept on straw in the church, and, as might be expected, the door of the sacristy was found broken open, and the

place itself stripped of all that it contained ; for where Charles appeared in person very little reverence was shown to the church ; and those things which even the most ruthless bands of plunderers spared were sure to disappear during one of his visitations.

CHAP. III.

It was about three o'clock on the following day when Albert Denyn and the good priest Dacy entered the city of Paris; but let the reader remember, that by those words, *the city of Paris*, we do not in the least mean to imply any thing like that great and extraordinary abode of talent and folly, virtue and crime, distinguished by a similar name in the present day. The city of Paris at that period was inferior in extent to many provincial towns of our own times, and very much inferior, indeed, to any provincial town in point of comfort and accommodation, cleanliness and neatness. Only a few of the principal streets were paved; all were so narrow that in most of them not more than three horses could go abreast; sand, filth, and ordure filled the lesser thoroughfares; and the ways were seldom, if ever, cleansed, except when the au-

tumnal inundations of the Seine washed away the dirt that had accumulated during the past year, and sometimes carried off several of the houses likewise. Here and there, indeed, rose, from the midst of the wild and confused mass of hovels and cabins which then formed the French capital, some of those splendid monuments of architectural genius which are never sufficiently marvelled at and appreciated, except when we look to the state of society and art at the time of their construction. Here appeared a magnificent church, there a vast abbey, there a noble palace, and every where was seen, amidst wooden houses and mere huts, tracery of stone-work so fine and beautiful, that modern times have never been able to approach the excellence of the execution, even when they have ventured upon the labour and expense.

Albert Denyn, however, and the priest were both full of anxious thoughts, which left little room for new impressions to penetrate. When man is at ease in himself, and the mind, as it were, idle in its empty house, it is natural that

the spirit should look out of the window and mark every thing that is passing in the world without; but when there is business within of high moment, the casements are closed against external objects, while the soul holds council in the secret chambers of the heart.

The young cavalier and his companion then rode along in silence, giving little attention to the mere physical appearance of the city they had entered, the one having seen it many times before, the other having come lately from foreign towns at that time far more splendid than the French capital itself.

There were other sights, however, of a kind calculated to awaken Albert Denyn's habit of observation, which now crossed his eyes as he rode on guided by the priest. Crowds of people were seen hurrying hither and thither, and every now and then, four or five persons would pause as they passed to gaze at the two wayfarers who were entering the great city, regarding them apparently with no very friendly looks, and making comments as they went on, which the young soldier judged, from a word or two that reached

his ear, to be of a somewhat offensive and menacing nature. He remarked, too, that almost every body whom he met, whatever might be the variety of colours and materials in other parts of their garments, had one piece of dress uniformly alike. This was the hood, which was the general covering for the head used in that day; and not one Parisian out of a hundred that the travellers passed in the streets were without a *chaperon*, as it was called, of party-coloured cloth or silk, half red, half green, with an enamelled clasp under the chin.

“ How is it,” demanded Albert, “ that the people of Paris have their hoods all of one colour, good father ? Is there any law to that effect ? ”

“ The law of fear, my son,” answered the priest: “ that party-coloured hood is the mark of the prévôt’s party, and if you were to look at the clasp, you would find enamelled on it the words *à bonne fin*. It was taken at first only by those who thought the prévôt was right; but since men have found that life is not safe without that mark of partisanship, even those that hate him the most have adopted it too. God

send that we get much further in safety without it."

Scarcely had he spoken when a body of armed citizens stopped Albert Denyn and himself, demanding, "Where go you, gentlemen travellers, and who are you for?"

Albert Denyn answered at once that they were going towards the Abbey of St. Germain des Près, to seek the King of Navarre ; and, as it fortunately happened that the interrogators were of the *prévôt*'s party, with whom Charles the Bad was leagued, the reply was satisfactory, and the two were told to pass on their way in peace.

They met with no farther interruption till they reached the small square before the eastern gate of the Abbey of St. Germain, where on the one side appeared the inn or hostelry of the Red Hat ; on the other, the bridge of the abbey ditch ; and between the church and the tavern, that ancient instrument of disgrace and punishment, the pillory.

A sturdy porter stopped Albert Denyn and his companion at the entrance of the monastery, demanding whom they sought, and on the

reply being given, told them that the King of Navarre was at that moment in the *champ clos* of the Près aux Clercs hard by, and had left particular orders that if any messengers from the Captal de Buch came to seek him, they were to be sent thither with all speed. Albert and his companion accordingly turned the heads of their beasts towards the rich meadows that at that time extended westward of the Abbey of St. Germain, and soon reached a spot where the murmuring sound of many voices showed that a number of people were assembled. In a minute or two after entering the space set apart for judicial combats, they found themselves in the midst of eight or ten thousand Parisians, who were crowding round the raised platform of wood from which the judges of the field generally witnessed the duels that took place below.

The front seats on the scaffold were now occupied by the King of Navarre, his officers and partisans; and from it he was addressing the people in a strain of eloquent blandishment, well calculated to gain the affections of the

easily flattered multitude. At the same time, it was evident that he laboured hard to inspire them with a great idea of his power and influence, and to show, that although the dauphin and royal family of France had proclaimed themselves his enemies, yet many of the greatest men in Europe held him in high veneration and respect. He was mentioning the names of several great leaders as friendly to him when Albert Denyn entered; and it now became evident with what view he had refused to receive the letters which the young soldier bore him from the Captal de Buch on the preceding night, reserving them to work their effect on the Parisians at the present moment.

“Who have we here?” he exclaimed, as his eyes fell upon Albert. “What seek you, young gentleman?” Albert’s errand was soon told; but the Navarrese monarch caused him to ascend the platform, and deliver his despatches before the eyes of the crowd. He then affected to consult with him long apart, and in the end announced to the willing ears around, that his noble cousin, the famous Captal

de Buch, had promised him the aid of his whole forces and his great renown. He pointed out Albert as a young gentleman high in the confidence of the capital, sent on purpose from Germany to bear him tidings of his speedy approach, and he then turned to the young soldier, asking what guerdon he would have for the good intelligence he bore.

Albert smiled at the farce that was played before his eyes, not having yet sufficiently mingled in the busy scenes of life to know that, in nine cases out of ten, “all the world is indeed a stage;” though in a different sense from that of the great poet, “and all the men and women merely players.”

He forgot not, however, the errand of his reverend companion, Monsieur Dacy, and he replied, in a low voice, “I ask no guerdon, your grace; but I do beseech you to take measures, that this good man’s niece shall be given up to him, and that he shall have free passage with her out of Paris.”

“Let me hear more of his story,” said the Navarrese; “speak quick and low, and I will do what I can.”

Albert answered briefly, and the wily king of Navarre seemed to listen to him with one ear, while with the other he gathered the sense of a long and vehement oration, which was commenced as if to fill up the time, by a tall powerful man, with a party-coloured chaperon, who stood near the king. Ever and anon, too, Charles the Bad would interrupt his conference with Albert, either to address a word to the speaker in a low tone, or to express his loud approbation of what was uttered.

“ You say she is in the *prévôt*’s house — ” he proceeded, talking to the young soldier; and then added aloud, “ it is true, every word of it. Excellent ! excellent ! — Keep off the subject of the money, Marcel. — Now, my friend, she shall be set free, and all aid given to good Monsieur Dacy. Our good Parisians will not hurt him : they have had one out of the family, and that is surely enough. — Now, Marcel, dismiss them with a benediction, and speak to me here.”

The last words were spoken to the orator; and Albert turned to gaze upon the famous

man before him, not doubting, from the name by which the King of Navarre addressed him, that the person who had been haranguing the people was the well-known *prévôt des marchands*. His countenance was somewhat bull-like, but in other respects not disagreeable; and there certainly was a high intellectual expression in the forehead and eyes, though the mouth and lower part of the face was heavy and earthly.

Marcel soon brought his speech to a conclusion, upon the hint of his confederate, and the multitude began slowly to disperse, while the *prévôt* came closer to the King of Navarre, and heard what he had to tell him, examining Albert Denyn narrowly from head to foot as he listened.

“ And you are the lady’s lover, I suppose,” he said, addressing the young soldier as soon as the King of Navarre had finished.

“ You mistake, my good sir,” replied Albert, in a tone of very little reverence; “ I never saw her in my life. It is for her uncle I am moved.”

“ A disinterested youth!” cried the *prévôt*

with a sneer: “ we must not keep him long in Paris, or the metal will get tarnished. However, if that be her uncle, he shall have my help to take her from my house as quickly as may be; for my wild nephew would fain have her for his paramour, and I approve not of such follies. — You should thank me for saving her from the rough hands into which she had fallen, when I found her,” continued Marcel, addressing the priest. But the good old man shook his head with a mournful air, answering, “ My brother’s blood, sir, were surely weight enough upon the hand that slew him, without the blood of his unhappy child.”

“ I slew not your brother,” replied the prévôt sternly: “ he was partly answerable for his own death. Why did he meddle with things that concerned him not? However, you shall have your niece, and God speed you home with her. Who has an inkhorn here? Maître Jacques, you have some parchment; give me two fingers’ breadth.”

Thus saying, he wrote a few words hastily on the parchment, commanding those of his house-

hold to give up to the Curé Dacy the daughter of his brother, and to suffer him to depart with her in peace. He then put the order into the poor man's hand, who received it with tears of joy, and taking leave of Albert Denyn, not without regret, left the spot to seek his niece at once.

The King of Navarre and the *prévôt* stood silent for a moment, after Dacy had left them, gazing apparently with some interest at the young soldier, who had cast down his eyes thoughtfully upon the ground, and remained for a very brief space, absorbed in deep meditation, though surrounded by scenes and people that might well call for active presence of mind.

“ And so now, young man, you are thinking what you are to do next,” said the *prévôt*, as Albert looked up again.

“ Not so,” replied Albert ; “ I have no doubts of the kind.”

“ Why, how, then, do you intend to bestow yourself?” demanded the *prévôt*.

I intend to take up my lodging for the night

at the sign of the Red Hat, before the gate of the abbey," Albert replied; " and to-morrow I set forth again, either for Touraine or the Beauvoisis, according to the information I receive this night."

The prévôt looked at him for an instant in silence, and then asked, " Will you sup with me to-night, young gentleman ? "

Albert's first impulse was to refuse; but the moment after, he thought, " I shall hear more there of all that is passing in France than I can any where else;" and he accordingly answered, " Willingly, sir : at what hour ? "

" At the hour of seven," replied the prévôt; and Albert, remounting his horse, rode away towards the inn which he had seen before the gate of the abbey of St. Germain.

" What want you with that youth ? " demanded the King of Navarre, as Albert turned from them: " he is a clever lad, but raw; yet, doubtless, a stout man at arms."

" I want many such, most noble king," answered the prévôt: " we are all busy with such things, that it is well to have help at hand, in

case of need. Six strong men, such as that, in his anteroom, would have saved Charles of Spain from the knife."

"I think not, Marcel," replied the King of Navarre, speaking of the murder which he had committed not long before, with the same calm carelessness with which the *prévôt* had himself alluded to it—"I think not; for I had twenty such with me, so that six would have been of small service. However, I beseech you, take care of the youth here in Paris; for the capital writes in such terms of him, that were any evil to happen to him, it might deprive us of our best hopes.—You know the capital as well as I do."

"I will guard him as the apple of my eye," replied the *prévôt*; "but let us go."

CHAP. IV.

ALBERT DENYN found his way back to the *Chapeau Rouge*, and, like all true men at arms, provided for the accommodation of his horse before he attended in any degree to himself. Nor, to say the truth, did he feel disposed to eat; for there had come upon him that feeling of oppression which the thoughtful and imaginative mind experiences in scenes through which the mere man of action passes with no other sensation than that of animal exertion. If he have but a heart, the man of the strongest intellect and most daring courage will find at certain moments, when surrounded by the whirlwind of passions and the storm of party strife, a shadow fall upon him like that of a storm cloud rushing over a summer sky. Without any definite reflections upon the emptiness of human endeavours, without any philosophic

thought upon the baseness of human nature, and the lowness of even man's highest earthly objects, a sensation of weariness and disgust at all that is passing around us will benumb us for a time, till some strong excitement calls us to mingle in the very scenes, to take part in the very deeds, which had produced the loathing. Then even we rise up like a slave to his appointed labour, and feel that we are but buckling on the burden of human destiny, till we are fully launched in a sea of exertions, and the more earthly portion of our mixed life in the excitement of action, overcomes the heavenly.

Albert entered the inn, and as the hour of supper was still at some distance, sat down at a table in the hall, and leaned his head upon his hand in deep thought. He had no active part in the things that were passing round him; he had but to stand by, and see the busy passions and fierce deeds of others; to witness the cunning of one, the bold knavery of another, the fierce ambition of a third, and the evils that were the result of all. He had but,

as I have said, to stand by and look on; and it seemed as if the splendid veil with which all the things of earth invest themselves had dropped down, and that he beheld at once the dust and ashes of which the whole is composed. These moments come to every one at some time or another in life — moments when we look, as it were, prophetically into the coffin of human desire and enjoyment, and see the mouldering bones and crumbling clay of these two bright children of earthly existence, as at some future period we may expect to behold them from the height of an after and a better state of being.

His thoughts first turned to the King of Navarre, and then to Marcel, and he asked himself, “Are these the men for whom France sheds her best blood? How vain, how very vain, are all the quarrels and dissensions of life! Well might the good prior say, that sooner or later I would see that the world I would not quit is a world of emptiness and sorrow, with scarce a grain of real gold to gild it for the eyes of children.”

Such was for some time the train that his

thoughts followed, but we need not pursue them farther ourselves. Almost every one in the end rises from such contemplations better, perhaps, than when he sat down; but still with a feeling that they too are vain, that, tied as we are to the burden of mortal existence, it is useless to inquire of what it is composed, or to try in a fine balance the weight of that which we are bound to bear.

After resting thus, then, for about half an hour, Albert rose up suddenly, and tightening the belt that held his sword, strolled forth into the streets, saying to himself, “I must gather some tidings in the city of what is passing in Touraine or Beauvoisis.”

Who ever saw Paris, except in the dead of night, without her myriads rushing here and there in the fierce pursuit of pleasure, vengeance, amusement, or folly? If the gay capital ever was still, such was not the case when Albert Denyn now issued out of the Chapeau Rouge. For the moment, indeed, the vicinity of the abbey of St. Germain was comparatively deserted, the tide having flowed

another way after the *prévôt* and the King of Navarre had left the *Pré aux Clercs*: but a very few minutes brought the young soldier into the midst of crowds of men, and women, and children, all seeming as busy and as gay as if the whole world was happiness and industry. Every where were seen the chaperons of red and green, and even the women affected the well-known colours in their garments, so that any one passing along the thronged thoroughfares without such a symbol might well be remarked by the eager eyes of a population, always ready to quarrel with those who give them any or no offence. Scarcely had Albert reached the bridge, when five strong men walking nearly abreast, and talking vehemently, stopped him rudely, and examined him from head to foot, exclaiming, “Where is the chaperon? Where the clasp?”

Albert Denyn felt his blood boil within him, and would willingly have replied with the sword, but outmatched as he was by the persons who opposed his passage, and knowing well that if even he escaped from them, that he was sur-

rounded on every side by partisans of the same faction, he answered, with an appearance of calmness that he did not feel, "I have been but a few hours at Paris—let me go on!"

"Ay, that is some reason," replied one of the men.

"Why, he is the man who was speaking with the *prévôt*," said another.

"One of those English dogs," exclaimed a third: "the *prévôt* is too fond of them;" but at the same time the speaker drew back with the rest, and suffered the young soldier to pursue his way. For some distance he was not subject to any farther annoyance, although the peculiar air and manner which always indicates the stranger in a town which he has not frequently or lately visited, pointed him out to the eyes of the Parisians, and called attention to his want of those party symbols, under which alone safety was to be found in the French capital.

At length, however, as he entered one of the streets leading from the water's edge towards the great hotel of St. Paul, he ob-

served a crowd of people gathered together at the distance of some three hundred yards from him, and as he approached he heard remonstrances uttered in a loud voice, mingled with urgent complaints and entreaties. There was a sufficient portion of the chivalrous spirit in the breast of Albert Denyn to make him take part eagerly with the weak and the distressed; and although he knew that his single hand could be of but little service where so many persons were engaged, he could not refrain from scanning the crowd with his eyes as he approached, in order to ascertain who was the sufferer whose entreaties met his ear.

For a moment or two he could only see a number of people all pressing round one particular spot; but the next moment, as the mob swayed to and fro, he caught a glimpse of a man in a clerical habit, and thought he recognised the form of the good Curé Dacy. He was instantly springing forward to satisfy himself of the fact, when a hand was laid upon his arm; and, turning sharply round, he beheld another group of soldiery, who had

come up the street behind him with a quicker step than his own. The face of the person who held him appeared familiar to him, though in the various scenes of strife and contention in which he had lately been engaged he had seen so many men of different grades and characters that he could not connect it with any particular train of events. There was a smile upon the soldier's countenance, too, which seemed to show that his recollection was better than that of Albert himself.

The latter, however, hastily disengaged his arm, exclaiming, "I cannot stop: they are hurting the poor old man, and I must help him. Who are you? what do you want?"

"Do you not recollect the Captain Griffith?" said the personage who had detained him. "But what are you going to do with these fellows? They are too many for you, if I judge what you are about rightly."

"Then give me some help," cried Albert Denyn: "they are maltreating the poor old man Dacy, and his niece too: do you not see her?"

“O ho! is that the game?” exclaimed Griffith. “ Well, lead on, we will aid you, though it is no business of ours after all. Still it keeps one in exercise, and that is something in this world.”

Albert Denyn darted forward, followed by Griffith and the four or five free companions who were with him, and, pushing their way with fierce recklessness through the mob, they were soon in the centre, where a young man of handsome person, but of somewhat loose and dissolute appearance, was dragging a very lovely girl away from the arms of the good old Curé Dacy, in spite of her tears, remonstrances, and cries. The people who stood round, took little part in the matter, except by laughter at the poor girl’s agony, and the priest’s grief and reproaches.

The scene, however, was changed in a minute: for Albert Denyn with one blow of his gauntleted hand struck the young ribald to the ground, while Dacy caught his niece in his arms; and Griffith and his companions drove back the crowd on both sides.

Swords were instantly drawn on the part of the Parisians; but Albert Denyn, unsheathing his own weapon, placed his foot on the prostrate body of the youth he had knocked down, exclaiming, "Take care, my men, take care, or worse may come of it. This fellow I have found violating the commands of the *prévôt*, and I will drag him to the *Hôtel de Ville*, or kill him if he resists."

"Why it is the *prévôt*'s own nephew," cried several voices from the crowd.

"I know that," replied Albert Denyn, "or, at least, I guess it from what the *prévôt* said."

The people seemed to hesitate, in consequence of what they heard and saw; and, probably, the matter might have ended peaceably, but some of those on the right pressed rather sharply upon one of Griffith's men, who, not being of a very patient and enduring race, struck the Parisian who was next to him a blow in the face, with the pommel of his sword, which dashed out three of his front teeth, and cast him back, bleeding, on those behind.

An instant shout of indignation burst from the crowd, and a tremendous rush was made upon the small knot of soldiery who were gathered together round the good Curé Dacy and his niece. Albert Denyn thrust himself between the poor girl and the foremost of the mob. Griffith's practised sword waved, not in vain; and, to say truth, though the numbers who were opposed to the Parisians were but small, yet their great superiority in the use of their arms, their daring habits, vigorous frames, and thorough contempt for their enemies, rendered each man there, in reality, equal to four or five of their assailants, so that the strife was by no means as unequal as it appeared.

After but a few blows had been given, the armed crowd recoiled, with several severe gashes apparent amongst the foremost of them; and Griffith, with Albert Denyn, as if comprehending, at once, what was best to be done, began to force their way onward, with the rest surrounding the poor girl and her uncle, as if to guide them in safety towards the Hôtel de Ville.

For a minute or two the mob continued to give way before the brandished weapons of the adventurers; but it soon became apparent that numbers were flocking up to the aid of the Parisians. A more formidable attack than ever was made at the corner of the next street; and one of Griffith's men was brought to the ground stunned by the blow of a mace, which dented in his steel cap, and well nigh fractured his skull. Griffith, himself, stepped forward to defend him, but, in so doing, he left a gap in their little circle. The nephew of the *prévôt*, who was then, again, at the head of his people, dashed in with two of the others, in spite of all the efforts of Albert Denyn, and, once more, seized his prey; and the situation of the young soldier, his companions, and the object of his interest, appeared nearly desperate, when a cry of "Marcel! Marcel! Long live the *prévôt*!" came thundering down the street, and a confused troop of horse and foot rushed on, driving in the stragglers, and making a way into the very heart of the crowd.

"What is this? What is this?" exclaimed the

Prévôt Marcel, springing to the ground and catching his nephew with a vehement and angry grasp. “ Jean, you are a licentious fool ! Did I not forbid this ? Did I not give orders that the girl should be suffered to depart ? ”

As he spoke, he thrust the young man vehemently from him ; but at the same instant came first a low murmur, and then a loud shout from the mob, with the words, “ Down with the English ! Away with the adventurers ! ”

Marcel looked fiercely round him for a moment, first turning his eyes upon the citizens, and then upon his own armed followers. But one or two of the latter had taken up the cry also, and were vociferating with the rest, “ Down with them ! down with them ! down with the English ! ” The prévôt saw that whatever might be his inclination, he would find but little support among his own people in any endeavour that he might make to protect the adventurers ; and like all fierce demagogues, though internally furious at any opposition on the part of those whom he was accustomed to lead blindfold, he determined to temporise and

yield to their clamour, with a strong determination of taking vengeance, at a future period, upon the chief of those who opposed his will.

“ Fear not, my friends,” he exclaimed in a loud and impressive tone: “ your prévôt will do equal justice upon all offenders. Stand back, my men, stand back, and let my train gather round us; we will deal with the Englishmen, and treat them according to their deserts.”

The aspect of affairs now began to be serious; for Griffith and his companions and Albert Denyn himself could catch no glance of recognition upon the prévôt’s countenance.

“ A pretty pass!” cried Griffith, as he saw the forty or fifty well armed soldiers of which the prévôt’s train was composed gather in a stern circle round him and the rest, keeping back the crowd but presenting a much more formidable array than the undisciplined multitude. “ Let us stand back to back, my men, for we know not on which side we shall be taken: we can make a pretty little hash of them yet, if they come near.—Now, master prévôt, what is it

that you mean by this? Are we not your friends, and the friends of the King of Navarre?"

"Not when I find you brawling in the streets," said the prévôt, affecting a fierce tone; but the moment after, he beckoned to Albert Denyn, saying, "You, at least, are a Frenchman — approach and speak to me."

"They came to help me," replied Albert Denyn, "in protecting this poor girl and the priest, who were attacked contrary to your own orders.—For good or ill I will take my part with them."

"Well done, my young gallant," cried Griffith: "you will soar high some of these days."

But in the mean time the prévôt made a quick and angry gesture, exclaiming, "Come hither, I say: you will make mischief speedily. You shall return to them, if you please."

Albert Denyn took a step or two forward, to the spot where the prévôt stood, close to the old priest and his niece, with his hand still grasping his nephew by the shoulder. It was to

the latter, however, that Marcel first spoke: “Get ye gone, Jean,” he said, pushing the young man back, “get ye gone to my house, and there wait as if you were a prisoner. I will not be long, and you shall remember this day’s fine deeds — There, make your way through the crowd, and begone !”

“And you, old man,” he continued, turning to the priest, “hie thee hence, out of Paris, as fast as may be, and take thy pretty mischief with thee: we have causes of contention enough among us already.—I know what thou wouldest say, but thou shalt have safe guard and conveyance.—Here, Guetry, take four strong men with you; find quick a litter or a horse for this girl; conduct her and her uncle safely for ten leagues upon their road ere noon to-morrow. You answer for them with your life.”

The man to whom he spoke was an old weather-beaten soldier, whose habit was ever to obey without any comment; and merely nodding his head, and saying, “Well, sir, well !” he took the priest by the arm, and drew him and his niece across the little space which had been

cleared round the prévôt, towards the side next the river.

“ Now, what would you with me ? ” demanded Albert Denyn : “ these men, I tell you, prévôt, were aiding me to rescue that poor girl, to whom you yourself promised protection and assistance. I now require you to give them an opportunity of going free, if they have done no other wrong than defending the weak and helpless against your vicious rabble of Paris.”

“ And what would be the consequences if I made the attempt ? ” asked the prévôt, leaning down his head and speaking low. “ They would be torn to pieces, and so should I myself. No, no, that will never do. Go tell them in a whisper,” he continued in the same undertone—“ Go tell them in a whisper, that there is but one way to save them.—If they resist they are lost. Let them seem to submit to my will, go whither I would have them, and as I would have them, and I pledge my salvation that they shall be out of Paris to-morrow.”

“ How is that ? ” demanded Albert ; but the

prévôt made an impatient gesture with his hand, exclaiming, “ Go ! go quick ! there is no time to spare ! ”

A fresh cry of “ Down with the English ! Down with the adventurers ! ” confirmed the words of Marcel ; and Albert, returning to the side of Griffith, who stood contemplating the menacing looks of the prévôt’s followers, and the crowd that was seen behind them, with an air of very great indifference, spoke with the leader of the free companions for a moment in a low voice. Ere Griffith could answer, however, the soldiers of the prévôt began to press closer round ; and, in a moment after, a general rush was made upon the little group in the centre of the circle. One of the assailants went down in an instant by a blow from the hand of Griffith ! A second was struck to the earth a little to the left. But ere another stroke could be given, the adventurers and Albert Denyn himself, were seized by the hands of the crowd, and most likely would have fared ill, had it not been for the prompt and vigorous interference of

Marcel, and two or three of his officers, who thought fit on this occasion to follow his lead.

“Do not hurt them, do not hurt them,” shouted the prévôt, loudly. “Bring them along to the Tour de Nesle: tie them if they resist.—By Sainte Geneviève, I will cleave you down to the mouth, François, if you touch him with that dagger. ‘Take that, then,’ and he dashed one of his unruly followers to the ground with a blow from the back of his battle axe which drove his iron cap down upon his head.

“I will be obeyed,” continued Marcel: “bring these men on to the Tour de Nesle. They shall be judged and dealt with according to law; but we will have no more murder in the streets. Come, away with them, away with them! and to-morrow they shall have sentence.”

“Long live the prévôt! Long live Stephen Marcel!” cried one of the men in the crowd. The rest took it up; and amidst a number of incongruous shouts and exclamations, Albert Denyn, Griffith, and the rest, were hurried on with no very great ceremony or tenderness towards an old tower, which stood by the side

of the river at the end of the town. As they came near the building, a number of the people ran on before, to call out the keepers of the prison in order to receive the captives. Marcel himself, who had remounted his horse, was also a little in advance; and as Albert Denyn was hurried past through the low-browed arch of the Tour de Nesle, he saw the prévôt speaking eagerly to a broad, square-built, heavy-looking man, with a knot of immense keys in his hand.

In the mean time the prisoners were driven forward; and it so happened, that the young follower of the Captal de Buch being the last in the line was in the very door-way of a large, dull-looking room on the left of the gate into which they had thrust his companions, when the person he had seen speaking to the prévôt pushed his way hastily through the soldiery and caught him by the arm, exclaiming, “Not in there, not in there, there are too many there already.—Here, Pierre le Nain! take two of them up-stairs; I will put this one in the prison behind!”

Albert Denyn saw little more, for he was dragged forward; and ere he well knew which way they were taking him, he was thrust into a small narrow chamber at the back of the building, the door of which was instantly closed and locked upon him.

CHAP. V.

UNDER the shadow of one of those deep old woods, whereof we have more than once had occasion to speak — which at that time covered nearly one third of the whole soil of France, and of which vestiges are still to be met with in almost every part of that fair land — in the dark hours of the night of the bright month of May, sat a group of men round a large watch-fire, whose lurid glare was the fittest light for the deeds of those on whose faces it shone. Gleaming through the bolls of the trees flashed the flame of many more ; and those who gazed upon that part of the forest from a height, might well have thought that some ruthless hand was endeavouring to consume it all.

At the spot which we have mentioned were collected some ten or twelve persons, as different from each other in mind, character, and pur-

poses, as it is possible to conceive. There was the hardy, honest peasant of a superior class, who, roused up by intolerable wrongs, had joined the Jacquerie, and had been led on, step by step, to deeds of blood and horror, which his soul abhorred. Close by him sat the rude, relentless ruffian, whose sole object was blood and lust, and who, after being long kept down by the hand of power, now revelled even unto drunkenness in the anarchies of the times. There, too, appeared the daring freebooter, who had long lived upon plunder, and who, finding the Jacquerie a more profitable means of pursuing the same trade, had joined the revolted peasants with many of his band. There, too, was the dull, but remorseless Jacques Morne; there, Thibalt de la Rue; and there, William Caillet, still maintaining that superiority over all around, which from the first had been the ^{despot's} meed of higher intellect and greater energies.

It was strange to see these men, some of whom had been very lately not even clothed in the garb of peasants, but covered with rags or skins, now robed in silk and rich cloth, or

cased in splendid armour, and decorated with chains of gold. The whole wealth of a province was theirs; for the first wild attack upon Plessy had not only encouraged their friends, and at once roused the whole peasantry throughout the land, but had, by its success, struck terror into their enemies, and caused a general consternation wherever the report was heard. Knights and nobles had fled before them; castle after castle had been taken by storm; small towns even had been captured and plundered; and still the cry went forth from many thousands of men in arms, “War to the castle and the palace! Death to the noble and the rich!”

Scenes of horror which no pen can describe, acts of barbarity that imagination can scarcely conceive, not only initiated the peasant into the new trade of the Jacquerie, but bound him to his bloody calling by the irreparable ties of crime. And there they now sat, the leaders of the insurrection, each urging it forward in his own peculiar way, and all contributing by their various passions to its distinctive character and extraordinary success.

Amongst them all, with their furred gowns, and their scarlet robes, and their rich embroidery, William Caillet appeared in a garb chosen with that peculiar and careful adaptation of means to an end which so strongly characterised his mind, and blended in such an extraordinary manner with the fierce passions of which he was the slave. No gold, no jewels, no sparkling ornaments appeared upon his person. He was clad in armour of the finest kind, and over all he wore a surcoat of unmixed black. His helmet lay beside him, even when he slept, and the only decoration which it displayed was a tall black plume, which, together with his commanding height, he knew would make him an object easy to be distinguished amongst the peasantry whom he had excited to revolt.

It was not, however, to produce an effect upon the enemy that he assumed this peculiarity of dress; he thought more of the people who surrounded him, and of the danger of losing his influence and command over them. It was thus an impression upon their minds that he sought to effect, and for that purpose he

chose his garb with care. Every serf who pillaged a nobleman's wardrobe he knew would appear in tinsel and glitter; but those plain dark arms, the black plume and coat, had not only something mysterious and solemn in their aspect, but something that harmonised with the character of his own feelings, and especially accorded with the stern, determined severity, the immovable, unrelenting determination which he found no difficulty in displaying.

He had become frugal of his speech since his first success; he conversed but little with any one, and made confidants of none but those whom he was forced to trust. From time to time, indeed, when any thing induced him to suspect that the zeal of his followers began to slacken; that some apprehension of the result produced a momentary hesitation; when he saw them divided in councils, or seeking some petty object to the neglect of a greater one, then his wonted eloquence would burst forth in words of fire, and lead all hearts away.

The consequence of this conduct was, that the whole body looked up to him with rever-

ence, not unmixed with fear. Even those, strange as it may seem, who had cast behind them every human apprehension, every holy respect, regarded him with some degree of awe, and obeyed him when he thought fit to command, without a word of opposition or a thought of resistance.

There was but one person who approached him with no such feelings, and that was old Thibalt de la Rue. His was a nature totally without deference for any thing. He was one of those who were very rare in that age, an utter unbeliever in all that others hold sacred ; he wanted, in short, the faculty of reverence ; and the very existence of a God he did not give credit to, because he could not comprehend the nature of any being worthy of veneration and respect. He believed not in virtue, except such animal qualities as the human creature shares with the brute ; and, perhaps, if he had inquired strictly into his own heart, he would have found that he only admitted that man might be brave, and woman tender, without conceiving that the one could be honest, or

the other chaste; and yet such are the strange contradictions in our nature, that this unbelieving frame of mind did not exclude superstition. The fact was, he could fear, though he could not reverence.

Not only were splendid dresses around that fire, though upon rude limbs, and unsymmetrical forms enough, but rich cheer, such as those lips had never tasted before the commencement of that year, was spread out in rude fashion for the leaders of the revolt. Fine trout from the stream, and carp from the tank; game of such kind as was then in season; and even the baronial peacock, with his spreading tail, was there, rudely cooked indeed, but washed down with wine which might have pleased an emperor, the warm vintages of the luxuriant south brought from afar, for those never destined to drink it.

We may well believe, that, under such circumstances, but small moderation was observed. Golden hanaps, plundered from this castle and that, passed freely round the circle; and under the daring influence of the grape, the joke, the jest, and the ribald song, passed hither and

thither, while similar sounds echoed up from the other fires which had been kindled in every part of the forest, giving the best indication, to any ears that listened, of the wild saturnalia which reigned in one of the fairest provinces of France.

There were only two of the persons present who drank moderately, and consequently were more silent — Caillet and Thibalt de la Rue. The first scarcely uttered a word to any one, passed the cup often untouched, and gazed, with his large flashing eyes, full upon the blazing pile before him, as if giving it back, fire for fire. Thibalt la Rue, on his part, spoke somewhat more ; glanced round the scene about him with keen, small, serpent-like eyes, and ever and anon, as he marked the traces of coming drunkenness in the vacant look and dropping mouths of his companions, a withering smile of ineffable scorn, and, as it were, of hatred for the whole human race, glanced over his lip, and passed away in an instant. His words, though sweet in tone, and accompanied with a bland expression, were generally venomously bitter, searching out, with terrible sagacity, the

tender point in every one to whom he spoke, and plunging in a dagger, where it was least expected.

To Caillet, indeed, that night his language was peculiarly gentle. There was a honied smoothness about it, which did more to put the keen leader of the insurrection upon his guard than if he had openly avowed the most hostile purposes. In one respect, Caillet had mistaken the character of Thibalt la Rue: he knew well his passion for gold, and had, in their late successes, pampered it to the utmost; but he had fancied that passion to be the only one. He believed that in him, as so often happens in the world, avarice had swallowed up every other feeling.

In this, however, he erred: the love of power was strong in the heart of the old man; he cared not, indeed, whether he ruled openly, or by another; but still he was well pleased to rule; to exercise his cunning and his skill, in guiding, directing, commanding; and he could not bear to see even Caillet himself, though he knew and felt his superior genius, completely

independent of his sway, by the influence he had gained over his fellow-insurgents. He had resolved, then, long before this period, that such a state of things should be changed, and, as his whole spirit was intrigue, he took no small delight in working for his own ends.

Let it not be supposed, indeed, that his design was to overthrow Caillet, for he saw too clearly that such an event as that man's fall must prove the destruction of all around. But he sought to gain such power over Caillet himself, as, through him, to govern the whole. Circumstances, as we shall soon see, had, up to this point, wonderfully favoured his schemes; but this was one of those critical instants, in which there was likely to be a struggle, and it was his object to turn Caillet in one direction, while he himself acted in another, in order to possess himself of an advantage which he felt sure would enable him to rule the leader at his will.

He had prepared all for his purpose before he sat down beside that fire, and by subtle insinuations to several of the persons present, he had prompted that proposal which was certain

to lead the forces of the insurgents in the direction that he desired, if Caillet still remained ignorant of facts with which he himself had accidentally become acquainted. He had so schemed, also, that if Caillet resisted, he was likely to meet with opposition for the first time, and perhaps to have his determination overruled by the voices of all the leaders present.

The proposal of which we have spoken had been delayed, and the feast and the revel protracted, somewhat longer than the old man liked; and at length, looking towards the captain of the freebooters we have mentioned, a man of great corporeal powers and no slight talents, he said aloud, after an unnoticed sign for the other to begin, “ Well, my friends, we had better settle our proceedings for to-morrow, before we are all quite drunk.”

Caillet remained silent; and the freebooter, then remembering the suggestions that had been made to him by Thibalt, exclaimed, “ Of course we shall now go to Senlis, as we proposed last week! There is nothing to stop us now; the town is open, and full of wealth; we shall get

immense booty, and destroy a whole nest of the viper nobility."

Caillet gazed at him, as he spoke, with a stern smile; but before he could answer, several of the others round exclaimed, "Oh, yes, to Senlis—to Senlis let us go: we shall never get such plunder as that."

The leader frowned, and replied sternly, "We go first to Ermenonville! That castle taken, I lead you to Senlis; but we must not leave it behind us, with its garrison ready to attack us in the rear."

"Send old Thibalt with ten thousand men to blockade it," cried the freebooter who had been well tutored: "there are not fifty men in the place; but before we have captured it, the dauphin's troops may be in Senlis, and we lose the best thing that has offered itself since the beginning."

Thibalt cast a rapid glance towards Caillet, to see how he relished the proposal; but the latter replied, fixing his eyes sternly upon the freebooter, "I do not change my purposes! What I have said is determined. We take Ermenon-

ville, and then attack Senlis; and should the dauphin's troops be in it, if there be no cowards amongst ourselves, we will burn them and Senlis together."

"Nay," cried the freebooter boldly, while several voices murmured something about proceeding to Senlis at once, "I see not why one man's voice should overthrow all our counsels. Let us put it to the vote here, whether we shall go first to Senlis or Ermenonville. You are a brave, strong man, William Caillet, and a good leader to boot; but not a bit braver, or stronger, or wiser, than I or any one else here present."

"If I am not," answered Caillet, rising coldly and slowly from the ground, "I am not fit to overrule your opinion, which I will do, or die. We will have no disputes or factions amongst us. There is one way, when any two leaders differ, of settling the matter at once, without sending the quarrel throughout the whole. Stand up, man, I say! stand up and draw your sword!—No words, my friends, but make a space around. He has said that I am not braver, or

stronger, or wiser than he is; I say that I am all! Now let him try. Stand back, I say; those that know me will not meddle.—Are you a coward?" he added, seeing that the freebooter hesitated.

His opponent's weapon instantly flashed in the air, and was aimed at Caillet's naked head, with a sudden straight-forward stroke which seemed destined to cleave him to the ground; but it was parried in a moment; and ere he could recover his guard, the sweeping blade of the insurgent leader struck him on the neck beneath the left ear, and laid him a headless trunk upon the earth, as if he had been smitten with a scythe. The dark blood spouted forth, and deluged the grass; and Caillet, wiping his blade upon a handful of leaves, replaced it in the sheath, saying, "A body of our men are already before Ermenonville; we will take it, ere two suns have risen and set, and then I promise I will lead to Senlis."

"When you have possessed yourself of fair Adela de Mauvinet," added Thibalt la Rue, with a sweet smile, and in a low tone; "but what

is to be done with this piece of flesh that lies quivering here? I fear it will be difficult to fit the head upon the body again; and if those he brought with him see them thus disjoined, they may very likely quit us, or breed a tumult."

" If they seek to quit us, let them go," replied Caillet; " we can well spare them. If they breed a tumult, there are plenty of trees to hang them to; nor will ropes be wanting, nor hands willing to do it. As for the rest, let his body be taken away and buried. The matter is sufficient as it is, to serve for a good warning, my friend Thibalt, both for those who listen to evil counsels, and to those who give them."

It was early on the following morning when the immense multitude of the insurgents surrounded the castle of Ermenonville; and, though the place was strong and well defended, yet before night terrible progress had been made towards its destruction. The walls were undermined in various places, and two or three more hours of light would have seen many a yawning breach in the defences.

Just about the time that the sun was setting, old Thibalt la Rue was seen speaking eagerly with four of the peasants, who had been carrying forward the attack on the side where he himself commanded.

“ But I tell you,” he said, in answer to some objection which one of them had seemed to make—“ but I tell you, that as soon as he has got possession of this girl, he will have all that he has ever desired, and then he will marry her, get a promise of pardon, and distinction for himself, quit us, and leave us to our fate; nay perhaps be the first to head the troops against us. No, no, we must enable her to make her escape, or else get hold of her ourselves, which would be better still; for then we could rule him as we liked.”

“ But how can we do it, how can we do it?” asked the peasant, to whom he was speaking. “ The old lord is too cunning to believe any thing you can write to him.”

“ I don’t know that,” replied Thibalt; “ and besides, there are four or five of the men from St. Leu who were villeins of the old lord’s, and

they go to this business with an unwilling heart, for they love him much. If you will consent and help me, I will speak with them as soon as the sun is down. We can get them, I dare say, to be hostages."

"But how can we get hold of the girl, then?" demanded the peasant to whom he spoke.

"By a sudden attack laid in ambush," replied Thibalt. "You shall command it; and can easily hide two or three hundred men in the brushwood on the skirts of the forest. It will all be easily managed: make his own people persuade the old lord to try an escape during the night, they becoming pledges for his safety. Do not set upon him till he is beyond our farthest posts: by that time the hostages will be free; so that if these men of Mauvinet require any sureties themselves, I can give myself up for one, and be at liberty before you make your attack. But mind, on your life and honour, you do no harm to the girl; otherwise, we lose our whole hold upon Caillet."

"I will take care of that," answered the other



—“ I will take care of that; but now, Master Thibalt, if I bring her safe to you, you shall ransom her from me, for it is for you I am working, that is clear enough.”

“ I will give you a hundred pieces of gold,” said Thibalt.

“ If you do not make it five hundred,” replied the man, “ I will take her up to Caillet, or keep her myself to be my own paramour.”

Even villains find a state of society in which all principle is at an end very inconvenient to live in; and old Thibalt himself, who had never conceived any moral tie as binding, now longed for some such bond, wherewith to secure his own instruments. He was obliged, however, to deal with things as he found them; and after settling the affair as far as possible, with those to whom he had first communicated his views, he prowled about till the sun was down, and then gathered together five or six of the men of Mauvinet, with whom he held a long and eager conversation. At length he procured a light, and a piece of parchment,

and sending for a cunning scribe over whom he had gained some power, he caused him to write hastily the following lines:—

“ Lord of Mauvinet,

“ These are written to you by a friend. The castle of Ermenonville cannot be held out. If you are the man that we believe, you are already thinking of cutting your way through, and selling your life dearly. However, as you were always a kind lord, and a good master, your friends in the camp of the free people of France have determined to give you an opportunity of escaping, if you choose to take advantage of it. In the quarter opposite to the western postern you will find a path open for you; and you may rest perfectly certain that you will be safe for the distance of two miles. But to render you more secure, as you may well entertain a doubt of the word pledged to you, you will find three hostages, unarmed, within five yards of the door. Them you will take with you for a mile on your way, and then set them free. But as you

value your own life, and the lives of those who risk all to save you, you must be as still as death, while you and yours go through the midst of the camp. Not a word must be spoken, and you must pass along slowly, lest the noise of your horses, or the jingling of your harness, should rouse others than those who seek your good. The hour is midnight."

As soon as this was written, it was tied to the head of an arrow, round the shaft of which was wrapped some tow. That material was then lighted, and the whole was shot into the castle. For several hours after, the ordinary scenes took place amongst the insurgents, but gradually about ten o'clock all noises ceased, and weariness laid the strong limbs at rest. Little guard or watch of any kind was kept amongst them, for their numbers were so immense, that they imagined they had no cause for fear. To all appearance the only persons that were awake amongst the whole multitude were William Caillet and Thibalt la Rue, who sat close together, talking eagerly

in their usual strain. The old man seemed anxious, rather than otherwise, to keep his companion's eyes from sleep, laying out schemes and plans for the future, and inquiring into the tidings which Caillet had received from various parts of France.

At length, however, Caillet exclaimed, "Get you gone, Thibalt, get you gone! I must sleep! For three nights I have not closed my eyes—but now I have them in my grasp! Nothing can snatch them from me now, and I may well have a few hours slumber."

Old Thibalt suppressed the bitter smile that was rising to his lip, and merely adding in a taunting tone, "I thought you never slept, Caillet," he left him, returning to his own part of their leaguer, where he instantly sought out the men he had been conversing with at nightfall.

"I am come, you see," he said, "to place myself in your hands. Where are the three men who are to be hostages?"

"They are gone forward already," replied one of the peasants. "Let us draw back, Master Thibalt, into this hollow, and watch what follows."

Thibalt accompanied them in silence; and then seating themselves in a little cavity of the ground, the party gazed eagerly for some minutes over the slope towards the castle. The night was very dark; and though one could see the sombre masses of towers and walls, marked by a deeper blackness upon the sky behind, nothing else was visible. All was silent too; but after a time the keen ears of the old man caught a sound, and raising himself upon his knees, he soon saw a number of dark objects, which might be men and horses, moving slowly and silently forward. They passed on with a low rustling, and were soon lost to his sight. Thibalt and his companions listened eagerly for several minutes, but at length, as all remained still, he turned, and said, "You see I have dealt fairly with you."

In less than half an hour, the three men, who had been given as hostages, came back; and Thibalt, without waiting to hear their account of what had taken place, exclaimed, "All is now safe, so I will retire to rest! and

he hurried away to a hut in which he had taken up his abode.

It was situated near the edge of the camp, and the old man was some time in reaching it; but even when he had entered and closed the door, far from seeking repose, he listened, with his head inclined and his ear turned to the window, till, suddenly, he heard a distant sound of shouts and clashing of arms, as of men in strife. Others heard it also, and rushed forth: the whole camp was soon roused, and every thing was noise and confusion. But in the midst of all, the leader of the peasants whom he had cunningly placed in ambush was brought into his hut, wounded and bleeding.

“ Curse upon them and you !” he exclaimed as soon as he saw Thibalt. “ They have escaped, and half killed me.”

The old man tried to give him consolation; but the dying Jacque rolled his eyes wildly round, saying to one of his companions, who had helped him thither, “ Fetch me Caillet. — I would fain speak to William Caillet.”

“ Go, go !” cried Thibalt, in a sweet tone,

“ fetch him Caillet, as he wants to speak to him.”

The man retired, leaving his comrade alone with the old serpent who had employed him; and in less than ten minutes Caillet was in the hut.

“ Alas ! you are too late,” said Thibalt, as he saw him — “ the poor fellow is dead. They have broken through, Caillet, you have heard, and killed poor Merlache, here. What he had to say, I know not, but he wanted much to speak with you.”

Caillet uttered not a word, but turned upon his heel.

CHAP. VI.

THE only article of furniture that was to be found in the prison to which Albert Denyn had been consigned was a small three-legged stool. And as the young soldier looked round at the bare walls, the small grated window some two or three feet above his head, the damp earthen floor, and the strong iron-plaited door covered with dull and dropping mould, he could not but feel a sort of heavy and cheerless cloud come over his brighter hopes, and make the prospect before him look more dark and gloomy than it really was. A moment after, however, the buoyant heart of youth rose up again, and he murmured to himself, with a smile, “This is certainly a strange turn of fate !”

He had still to undergo that which is more difficult to endure, without despondency, than any sudden misfortune or disappointment;

namely, the weary passing of hours in solitude and idleness. At first, he consoled himself with the thought, that the *prévôt* would certainly not fail to keep his promise, and set him and the rest of the prisoners at liberty, as soon as he could do so without danger. The king of Navarre, he fancied, also, out of respect for the *Capital de Buch*, would not suffer his imprisonment to be long.

Nevertheless, as hour after hour went by, and not a soul entered the prison, either to bring him provisions, or exchange a word with him, his spirits sank, and he felt a degree of melancholy creep over him, of which he was ashamed, and with which he struggled, without being able to overcome it.

The light which the chamber possessed was but little, even in the brightest part of the day; but now that light began to decrease; and, at length, the young soldier saw the last ray fade away, and all was darkness. He continued to walk up and down the room, however, giving way to all the sad thoughts which were naturally sug-

gested, not only by his own situation, but by the state of France, and the dangers which surrounded those who were most dear to him. The wing of Time flew on, with nothing to relieve the monotony of its passing, except the noises which he heard, occasionally, proceeding either from other parts of the prison, or from the busy world without, the tie between him and which seemed now to his eyes entirely dissevered.

During the early part of the night the sound of tongues reached him, talking loudly, in some of the neighbouring chambers; and once he heard a gay voice singing in the English tongue; showing, that either the other prisoners did not share his despondency, or else were better provided with means of lightening the load of imprisonment. Then, again, the plashing sound of oars, and the rushing of a boat through the water immediately beneath the tower, struck his ear, and gay tongues, and a merry laugh, from a distance — probably from the other side of the river — served more to increase his melancholy, by contrasting

harshly with his own feelings, than to enliven him, by showing that there was still joy and cheerfulness in the world. As time went on, however, all these sounds ceased, and silence took up her dominion over the gay metropolis of France.

To the best of Albert Denyn's judgment, midnight was past by more than one hour, when he again heard the noise of oars, and a boat seemed to stop beneath the walls of the tower itself. The next moment, three sharp blows, as if struck by some heavy substance against a wooden door, reached the ear of the young prisoner; and, after an interval of silence, which lasted, perhaps, four or five minutes, the blows were repeated, and a voice exclaimed, "Mathew, Mathew ! open and let me in !"

For a short time no other sound was heard, but then a heavy foot sounded upon the stairs, the great gate creaked upon its hinges, and the murmur of two persons speaking low made itself faintly heard through the door of his prison. An instant after, that door, itself, opened, and a bright light flashed

in, dazzling Albert Denyn's eyes, so that he could not, at first, see who it was that approached. It was the voice of the *Prévôt* Marcel, however, that exclaimed, as he turned sharply to the keeper of the tower, who was behind him, "How is this, Mathew? You have left him without bed, or light, or food, apparently!"

"You never told me to give him either," replied the gaoler: "you said to keep him alone ——"

"But not to starve him," cried the *prévôt*. "However, quick, bring him some food and wine. They have treated you ill, my young friend, but I have not forgotten my promise."

Certainly, five minutes before, Albert Denyn would have thought a jest the most unpalatable thing in the world. But so speedy are the revolutions of feeling in the human heart, that apprehension and despondency vanished at once, and he replied gaily, "You invited me to supper, monsieur le *prévôt*—I must say you have given me dainty fare."

"Knights errant," answered the *prévôt* with

a grim smile, “have always been known to feed poorly, and sleep on hard beds ; and such will ever be the case, my good sir, with those who meddle in affairs with which they have nothing to do.”

“But,” exclaimed Albert Denyn, “you would not have me stand tamely by, and see —”

“Well, well,” exclaimed the prévôt, interrupting him, “we have no time to talk of these things now. Besides, the matter is settled, and there is never any use of returning to a business that is gone. Let the past have its own ! From its sad and dark dominion we can never recover one of all the things that have bowed to its sway — be they the bright and beautiful ; be they the stern and terrible ; be they good, be they bad. The Past is the only monarch against whose sway there is no appeal, and from whose dread sceptre there is no escaping.—The old man and his niece are safe, far beyond the walls of Paris. Your friends here, in the prison with you, shall be set at liberty before to-morrow

morning. But it is with you that I have to speak, and with the present that we have to deal. You are a Frenchman, are you not?"

"A true one," answered Albert Denyn.

"Then, how come you to be serving with the Capital de Buch?" demanded the prévôt.

"I have only served with him in foreign lands," replied Albert; "but never against my native country. For it I will always draw my sword, and never against it; and that the noble capital knows right well."

"Good—good," said the prévôt; and, after thinking for a moment, he added, "I have a task for you, which you must not refuse."

"Tell me more of it, prévôt," rejoined Albert. "I have learned many a lesson of late, and, amongst the rest, know, that one ought to undertake nothing, without comprehending, clearly, what it is, and what it leads to."

"You are right to be cautious," said the prévôt; "but it is a task that you may well be proud to perform."

He paused and mused for several minutes; and then, while the gaoler brought in a small

table and some food, he spoke of indifferent subjects, or else gazed heavily upon the ground. As soon as the man was gone, however, he continued, saying, “ Fall to and refresh yourself; but keep your ears open.—There is a young lady now in this town of Paris — would to God that she had not come hither ! — of high rank and station; but of a race who are safer any where else than in the French capital. You have heard of the taking of the tower of the Louvre, where we found such a supply of arms and ammunition: she was known to be therein, and the mob sought for her, somewhat eager for bloodshed. I found means to save her from their fury, for the time ; for, though no way tender-hearted, I love not to see a woman’s blood spilled ;—and, besides, it is always well to leave some door open for retreat in case of need. I concealed her then; but these people, these Parisians, the most turbulent and ungovernable race on the face of the earth, know that she is still in the capital, suspect me, and watch every movement that I make. She must be got out of Paris before day-break to-morrow.

I dare send none of my own people with her to give her protection, and I know no one to apply to but you."

Albert Denyn listened eagerly, and imagination whispered instantly in his ear the name of Adela de Mauvinet. There was no cause, it is true, why he should suppose the *prévôt* spoke of her. He had merely mentioned a lady of high rank, and there was not any reason whatsoever for believing that Adela was in Paris; but yet a feeling of hope and expectation rose in the breast of the young soldier, which made his heart beat high as he listened. Did you never remark in the midst of some wide extended plain, while the clouds of an April day are passing over, sweeping forest and field, village and stream, with their blue shadows as they fly, one bright particular spot—some church spire, or cottage window—on which the light rests longer, and catches more frequently, than on any other point in the whole scene—a spot which seems to draw to itself every stray sunbeam that visits the landscape, and which shines out the moment that a ray finds its way

through the cloud? Such is the object of its love to a young heart. The moment that the light of hope breaks through the darkness of despondency and the clouds of care, the first rays fall naturally upon the predominant object of the heart's affections, making it sparkle with contrasted splendour from the gloom of the scene around.

Without an instant's hesitation Albert Denyn accepted the task, only remarking, "It is unfortunate that you can give me no one to accompany me, a single hand can do but little in times like these."

"I have no one, I have no one," said the prévôt impatiently. "If I contrive to get her safe from Paris, it will be no slight thing. Your task must be to bring her in safety to Ermenonville or Beaumont."

"Could I not have some of the English with me?" demanded Albert Denyn. "There are several of them I have seen before, and one named Scroope, who stood strongly by me when they had taken me prisoner, and were about putting me to death."

“ I dare not trust them,” replied the prévôt, “ I dare not trust them ; they are all rank marauders ; and if they were to discover the prize they have in their hands, they would cut your throat for the mere ransom, if they could not get you to join and share with them. Yet stay — this fellow Scroope, you may take him with you ! Man to man, you will be his match, doubtless, and he must promise to be under your command. Wait a moment or two and finish your supper ; I will go and speak with him.”

The prévôt quitted the chamber, and Albert Denyn was left for about a quarter of an hour in solitude. At the end of that time, however, Marcel returned with the soldier Scroope, who laughed when he saw the young soldier, saying good humouredly, “ So I am to be under your command, though I have seen more battles than you have seen years. However, I’d be under the command of a baby of six months old, in order to get out of the hole into which they have crammed me, giving me nothing but sour wine and hogs’ flesh.— But tell me, how

came you by this fine coat of arms? When last I saw you, there was something not quite so gay about you."

" That is nothing to you, my good friend," replied Albert Denyn: " be you sure that the arms are my own, as well as that medal of the emperor, at which you are looking.—He put it round my neck with his own hand," the youth added proudly. " But let us not waste time. I am ready, sir prévôt."

" Not till I have finished this flagon," cried Scroope; " if you do not drink it, I see no reason why I should not."

The rest of their proceedings in the prison were soon brought to an end. Marcel led the way out, and descending the little sloping muddy path which led to the bank of the river, they found a boat with a solitary boatman, who rose as he perceived the prévôt.

" Quick, Mathurin," said the prévôt, speaking to the person in the skiff; " you I can trust. Run back with this key; bring out another horse, a *destrier*, to the place where I sent the boy with the others. If they seek to stop you

at the gate, show them your badge: we will row ourselves to the place."

The man sprang to the shore; Albert Denyn, the *prévôt*, and Scroope entered the boat; and the Englishman, seizing the oars of his own free will, rowed rapidly on, under the direction of Marcel, to a spot on the other bank of the river.

As near as possible, at the point where the houses of the village of Passy approach the river in the present day—but which then formed part of a green field bordered by a vineyard and embellished with several groups of tall trees—appeared in the clear moonlight a dark mass standing under one of the elms. It might have been composed of bushes for aught that the eye could really discern, but the imagination of Albert Denyn instantly aided him to arrange it as a group of men and horses. In this instance, imagination was right to a certain degree: the horses were there; one tied to the tree itself, and another held by a page covered with a large riding mantle. No other human beings, however,

were there ; and Albert Denyn, who sprang to the ground before the prévôt, looked round in vain for the lady.

Marcel spoke a few words to the page in a low voice ; and speedily after was heard the sound of another horse's feet coming rapidly. The noise was soon found to proceed, however, from the approach of the man named Mathurin, leading a charger provided with a strong steel saddle and head-piece.

“ Now mount quick,” said the prévôt ; “ and God speed you.”

“ But where is the lady ?” demanded Albert Denyn.

“ You will find her by the way,” replied the prévôt.

“ I am to ride her horse, and enact the lady, till you do,” cried the page, springing upon the light jennet which he had hitherto held : “ I can show you the road, if you do not know it.”

“ Oh, we all know the way right well,” replied the man named Scroope ; “ you saucy pages think that no one is acquainted with any thing but yourselves.”

Thus saying, he mounted the beast provided for him; and taking leave of Marcel, with one or two words of instruction from the prévôt, as to what places they were to avoid, and what places to seek, the little party set out upon its journey.

CHAP. VII.

ALBERT DENYN, the page, and the stout yeoman, Scroope, rode on for about an hour almost in silence; the two former were certainly occupied with thoughts of their own; the latter was troubled with very few thoughts of any kind; but, unlike some persons, whose mind is lightly loaded, his tongue was not the more active on that account. He was the perfect soldier of that day, though a favourable specimen of the animal; for his heart was good, his judgment not bad; and when called upon to act, he did so in a manner very creditable to himself; but until the moment for action came, he went on, without the slightest inquiry regarding what was to happen next, and in utter carelessness of every thing that was taking place around him. He was exactly one of those, so well depicted by Dryden, who whistle as

they go for want of thought; and, indeed, in the present instance, he practised the same musical idleness, whistling a light air, till Albert put him in mind that he might call attention to their party, which was not at all to be desired.

During the hour that we have mentioned, the thoughts of Albert Denyn were stirred up by expectation, and he looked anxiously forward every moment, in the hope of seeing the person whom he was destined to escort. At the end of that time, however, the moon touched the edge of the sky; and although morning was near, the sun yet gave no light. There seemed every chance of passing her in the darkness; and Albert Denyn could refrain no longer, but turning to the page, he said, “Surely we cannot have missed the lady.”

“Do not fear, do not fear,” replied the boy, laughing; “all will go right, I dare say.”

“But I do not choose to trust to dare says,” rejoined the young soldier, not particularly well pleased with the tone of the page’s answer. “Have you good reason to think that we are on

the tract to find her?—The prévôt told me that it would be with the greatest difficulty that he got her out of Paris; and if he brought her as far as this, he might send her with equal safety to Beaumont."

"Doubtless," said the boy in the same tone; "but she may be nearer to us than we think!—Do you not understand yet, young man?"

"Perhaps I do," replied Albert Denyn; but at the same time his expectations grew cold, for the voice that spoke to him was certainly not that of Adela de Mauvinet.

The party relapsed into silence again; and in about half an hour, the eastern sky grew grey and then yellow, and twilight and light succeeded to darkness. Albert Denyn turned a near glance upon the countenance of his young companion, and he saw, beneath the page's hood, the soft features and fair skin of a very beautiful girl, of about two or three and twenty years of age; but that girl was not Adela de Mauvinet. Tenderness and courtesy towards woman, however, was a part of the

young soldier's code ; and after riding on by the lady's side for some way, he said, " Are you not likely to be much fatigued ? "

" Oh no," she replied ; " I have been used lately to a harder life than I ever thought to know. But at all events it were better to die of weariness, than to be torn to pieces by the mad mob of Paris."

" But what can you have done," asked Albert Denyn, " to offend the people ? I thought that the good Parisians were softened in a moment by youth and beauty."

" You have heard the same story," answered the lady, " of the effect produced by an innocent maiden upon a lion. I should not like to be the virgin to try, however, and much less to trust the tiger of Paris—I mean the mob of the capital—with no other arms than youth, beauty, or innocence either. Why, without shame or remorse, they would cut off Diana's ears, and hang up Venus to the first spout they could find."

She spoke laughing, but with some degree of bitterness, and similar to the specimen we have

given was her conversation as they proceeded. In despite of all that she had gone through, she was still light, gay, and somewhat coquettish withal : by no means without a due sense of her own beauty, and her own wit, and of the united effect of both upon her companions. Nor is it to be denied that, as he rode on hour after hour, by the side of this fair being, Albert Denyn felt no slight degree of interest and admiration. But still she was not to him, nor ever could be, Adela de Mauvinet.

We must not pause upon all the little adventures that took place by the way ; nor tell all the little acts of kindness and attention which Albert paid to his fair charge ; nor must we detail how she assuredly tried to pique his admiration to the highest point, and felt somewhat pettish and disappointed on finding that, though full of chivalrous courtesy and attention, there was none of that fiery and eager admiration about him which is in general so easily excited in the breast of the young.

All passed in safety. Here and there, indeed, the travellers heard of parties of free

companions, and as they proceeded farther from Paris, sad tales of the ravages of the Jacquerie met their ears. Once, indeed, they were induced to turn several miles out of the direct road, so that Ermenonville was still at some distance when day began to decline ; but no troop, either of the adventurers or of the insurgent peasants, presented themselves ; and the lady continued to make light of the revolt, and to declare that all the Jacques in the world could not be so bad as the citizens of Paris.

Even her tone, however, was changed, when, pausing at a small village where they proposed to pass the night, she saw the smoking ruins of a tall castle on the neighbouring hill, and heard that it had been burned to the ground three days before by the peasantry of Brie.

A hurried consultation was held on the following morning early, between the lady and Albert Denyn, for it can hardly be said that Scroope took any part therein ; ready to follow wherever any one else preceded him, but neither willing nor, indeed, able to lead. The first point to be considered was, in what direction

their steps should be turned ; for some rumours had reached them during the preceding evening, of a large body of insurgents barring the way towards Ermenonville ; but the lady pressed eagerly that they should, at least, make the attempt in that quarter.

“ I have faithful friends,” she said, “ in the castle itself ; and if I could once reach them, I should feel safe.”

“ We will try,” replied Albert Denyn, “ we will try. But if we find ourselves shut out from Ermenonville, it is to Beaumont, is it not, that we must direct our steps ?”

The lady assented, and they rode on with the first light of the day, in the direction which had been fixed upon.

They had proceeded about six miles when, towards seven o’clock in the morning, the sun, which was still low down in the sky, appeared to pour all his rays upon one spot in the landscape, at the distance of about a mile from them, as they passed across the brow of a hill which looked over the country, far and wide around. The light flashed brightly back from that point

to the eyes of the little party, as if reflected from some bright substance ; and the lady, drawing in her horse's rein, exclaimed, " What is that ? what is that ? Those must be armed men."

" I think it is so," replied Albert Denyn ; " and, by seeing no surcoat amongst them, I should judge that they are the rebel Jacques. Wait here, with this soldier, lady, and I will go on and ascertain."

Although his fair companion besought him, eagerly, to stay with her himself, and send the man Scroope forward to reconnoitre, Albert Denyn would not trust that task to his somewhat duller intellects, and rode on, winding amongst the lanes and high banks, in order to get as near as possible, without being observed, to the party he had seen.

At length, at a spot where he could just raise his head above the bank, he obtained a full view into the meadow, where some thirty or forty men-at-arms were collected ; and the scene presented to his eyes was one of no slight interest. The distance was too great for him to distinguish the faces ; but he was soon satisfied that

the persons there collected did not belong to the Jacquerie. In one part, a group was gathered together, eating what seemed a hasty meal; in another, a strong man with his corselets stripped off, was holding out his naked arm, while a woman, on her knees beside him, twined a long bandage round what seemed a severe wound. Under some trees appeared three or four ladies and two men, with a page apparently helping them to wine; while at a little distance under a bank were collected the horses of the party with a boy watching them.

Satisfied with what he had seen, but yet judging that it was more prudent, circumstanced as he was, to avoid all communication with strangers, Albert Denyn rode back, and met his fair companion—whose impatient spirit would not suffer her to remain where he left her—coming down by the road which he had followed.

“ Well, what are they? what are they, ungallant squire?” she cried. “ If you leave ladies, intrusted to your care, in that manner, you will get no fair hands to buckle on your knightly spurs — what are these men?”

“ They seem of gentle blood, lady,” replied Albert, “ and have women with them ; but, nevertheless, I think we had better pass on our way without venturing to speak with them. They may be some of the English bands, and as bad as the Jacquerie.”

“ Worse, perhaps,” said Scroope, bluntly : “ were they to meet with a pretty lady dressed as a boy, I would not answer for any of our brave fellows not thinking her fair game.”

“ Hush, sir !” cried the lady, turning upon him with an air of dignity and sternness, very different from the coquettish manner which she had assumed towards Albert Denyn : “ hush, sir ! you do not know of whom you speak.”

“ By the Lord, it matters very little,” replied the man, with a tone of indifference : “ a good English rider would not stop to ask who or what you are, so that he found you in that dress, and in these fields. Nevertheless, do not be offended or afraid : I will do my best to befriend and protect you, as I have promised ; but I think, with my good companion, we had better keep out of the way of superior numbers.”

By this time they had reached the spot from which Albert Denyn had reconnoitred the party; and a little farther on, the bank sloped down still more, so that the lady herself was enabled to see over into the meadow. That little germ of curiosity which is at the bottom of every heart, both male and female, and mingles itself with more things than we think of, would not suffer her to let the opportunity pass unemployed; and, drawing in her rein, she gazed out over the field, where the party we have spoken of was, by this time, in the act of gathering together their equipments, and mounting their horses for the purpose of departure.

“I cannot but think,” exclaimed the lady, “that those must be French arms I see yonder.”

“You had better ride on, lady,” said Albert Denyn: “they will see our heads above the bank, and worse may come of it.”

“See, see!” said the lady, without attending to what her companion said — “see! they are raising a banner there. — Whose arms are those?”

“ Mauvinet ! Mauvinet !” cried Albert Denyn, clasping his hands with joy : “ good friends to the crown of France, lady ! The seneschal of Touraine ! Let us haste to meet them : they must cross by the gap we have just passed ;” and without more ado, he turned his horse and galloped back, scarcely remarking whether the lady followed him or not.

In a minute he had reached the break in the bank which led into the fields ; and spurring his charger through, he dashed forward, at full speed, to meet the party, which was now coming slowly on, four or five abreast, with the good Lord of Mauvinet and several other gentlemen in the front, forming a guard on either side of a fair female form, the sight of which made the stout heart of Albert Denyn flutter like that of a timid girl.

On the other hand, the sudden appearance of a horseman covered with a surcoat of arms, unknown to any one present, followed at some little distance by what seemed a page and another man at arms, created some surprise,

and, as it happened, apprehension amongst the party of the Lord of Mauvinet.

“ Halt !” cried the count, as soon as he saw him approaching. “ Who have we here ? — Some fresh bad tidings, I fear. — Whose are those bearings on his coat ? Argent a bend dexter azure — those are not French arms, I think. Why turn you so pale, my Adela ? Fear not, fear not : we can defend you still, dear girl — but, surely, I know that youth — Albert Denyn, as I live. Welcome, welcome, my dear boy !” and the old nobleman held out his arms to his young retainer as if he had been a son.

Albert Denyn sprang to the ground, and eagerly kissed the good lord’s hand, and then turning a look full of emotion to the other side, he saw the sweet eyes of Adela de Mauvinet, filled with tears, bent down towards the saddlebow, while the quivering of her lip told to him, and perhaps to others, what a struggle there was in her breast to prevent the words of joy from breaking forth.

A few moments of silence followed on all

parts, and then some sentences of explanation succeeded; but ere Albert Denyn could say one half of that which he had to tell, the eyes of the old Lord of Mauvinet had lighted on the lady in a page's habit, who was now approaching near; and after passing his hand twice across his sight, as if to clear it from some illusion, he cast his rein to an attendant, sprang to the ground, and advancing towards the fair rider with a lowly inclination, pressed his lips upon her hand. This act, as may be supposed, created some small bustle and surprise in his own troop; and under favour thereof Adela bent down her head to speak to the companion of her childhood, saying first aloud, "Who is that, Albert?" and then adding, in a low voice, "Thank God! thank God, you have come back to us! Ay, and with this too," she added, laying her finger lightly for a single instant on his coat of arms. "Well won has it been, I am sure, dear Albert, and ever will be nobly borne—But who is this my father is bringing up?"

"In truth I do not know, dear lady," replied Albert: "she is a high-bred, and somewhat

high-mannered, lady, who was put under my charge to conduct in safety from Paris, where her life was in danger, to Ermenonville."

He had not time to say any more, when the Lord of Mauvinet, leading the lady's horse by the bridle, approached, saying, "Dismount, my Adela, and pay due reverence to the Duchess of Orleans."

The surprise of Albert Denyn was not less than that of those around him: but after the little bustle occasioned by the meeting was over, a short consultation was held; and on hearing that the duchess was wending her way towards Ermenonville, the Lord of Mauvinet shook his head mournfully, saying, "Ermenonville is but a name, madam. Two days ago we ourselves, in all but thirty fighting men, strove to hold out the place against eight thousand Jacques. Finding it in vain, we made our way through them in the night, not without some loss and some wounds, leaving behind us at Clari on the hill two men to watch the proceedings of the villains, and bring us tidings. From them we find that ere the sun had risen three hours, on

the day we left it, not a stone was left standing of Ermenonville. We were even now bending our steps towards Beaumont on the Oyse, thinking, madam, that you were there. We know, however, that there is a strong body of men in the place, and we may well expect aid from Paris, or from Montereau."

"From Montereau, perhaps," replied the duchess; "but from Paris, none. However, let us onward, my good lord, for it seems that danger lies upon the path that we were following. At Beaumont we shall find some repose, and can hold counsel farther."

As the lady spoke, she took her place between the Lord of Mauvinet and his daughter, making a sign to Albert Denyn to occupy a place behind her, and saying aloud, "Follow me, my young friend; you shall still be my squire, so keep close to your lady. I owe that good youth much, my Lord of Mauvinet, though whether from some secret knowledge of my name and station, or because he is somewhat young in ladies' company, he has been as cold and shy as a new captain of the guard."

The Lord of Mauvinet replied something in a light tone; but Adela turned her eyes to the young soldier's countenance with a smile which seemed to say, that she knew better than the gay duchess the causes of his coldness and his shyness.

The party proceeded, and after a somewhat fatiguing march, they came in sight of the tall towers and heavy walls of the castle of Beaumont on the Oyse, and rode gladly up the ascent, in hopes of repose and safety.

One after another, the cavalcade entered through the heavy arches of the gate tower; but ere Albert Denyn followed their example, he turned for a moment to gaze around him, and to examine the features of the country in which he was about to pause for the night, as had become habitual with him, during the wandering life which he had lately led under the banner of the Captal de Buch.

The spring sun was shining over a sparkling scene, casting long shadows here and there, from wood, and village, and rising ground; so that, though the scene was fair to look upon, it was difficult for any unpractised eye to judge ex-

actly of the various objects which the prospect might contain. At two points of the plain of Chambly, however, Albert Denyn saw some sombre masses of considerable extent, which puzzled him not a little. They were darker than the mere shadows cast by the copses, yet they did not seem to be sufficiently raised from the surface of the country to be either woods or hamlets. Albert continued to gaze, for the purpose of seeing if they were stationary, but they neither advanced nor receded, and he then cast his eyes upon the ground, and remained musing somewhat gloomily for a moment or two. Suddenly, however, a hand was laid upon his arm, and the friendly voice of the Lord of Mauvinet said, “ How now, Albert, why are you tarrying here, when there are friends within who are anxious to hear all that has happened to you ? and why look you so sad, when, from all that I have heard, and all that I see, there is no man in all France, should have a gladder heart than you ? ”

“ My noble lord,” replied Albert, willing to avoid the real subject of his thoughts, “ I cannot think how any one in France can have a

cheerful heart, and see her in such a state as she now is ; but if you would know what I have been watching, look there, at those two dark spots some five miles off."

" What are they ? " said the Lord of Mauvinet : " your young eyes are better than mine, Albert. I do not see them move : they seem to me like the young plantations made by the last king."

" If they be young plantations, my lord," replied Albert, " there are men in them. They do not advance, it is true ; but if you will look steadfastly, you will see the edges change their shape from time to time, like the outskirts of a great crowd of people collected in one spot, for the night."

" The Jacques, for my life, then," cried the old lord : " we must have them well watched, Albert : ay, and by some of our own people too ; for I find these fellows in the castle here had thoughts of abandoning it before we came up, and I do not believe they are much to be trusted. I will set Pierrot to look out from the highest tower.— But you come in with us ; the duchess

asks for you ; and you must tell us all your adventures."

" Nay, nay, my lord," answered the youth, " my adventures are little worth hearing, and, in truth, I cannot speak of them before a crowd who care nought for me, and know nought of me."

" Nonsense, nonsense," cried the old lord ; " there is no crowd there ; the knights and the men at arms are all in the hall, the duchess sups in her own bower, with none but myself and Adela, and one whom you must love and like, the young Lord Louis de Chamblé. He saved my life at Ermenonville, and is very dear to me. The duchess asks for your presence, too, and you must obey."

" But," said Albert Denyn, " perhaps she does not know ——"

" Yes, yes, she does know," replied the old nobleman, " she knows more than I did, till she herself told me : that it was the emperor himself who gave you that chain and surcoat ; so come, my good youth, without further words."

Thus speaking, the count turned into the

castle again, and Albert Denyn followed, to the presence of the Duchess of Orleans.

The page's garb was now thrown aside, the princess had resumed her own attire, and with it her manner had become more dignified and calm, though not without a spice of gay coquetry from time to time, which sat not ill upon her pretty features. She welcomed the young soldier graciously enough; but after the first formal compliment to herself, the eyes of Albert Denyn instantly turned to the only other male person present, the Lord of Mauvinet having left the room for an instant, in order to give directions for watching the castle walls during the night. By the side of the duchess was seated the young nobleman of whom the count had spoken. He was handsome and prepossessing in look, distinguished in demeanour, and with every external sign of one as likely to win a lady's heart as to gain the approbation of those on whose decision her hand depended.

Albert Denyn owned that there was nothing that he could find fault with in the whole appearance of the young Lord of Chamblé, un-

less, indeed, it were the slightest possible tinge of superciliousness in his manner towards himself; but yet he loved him not, and felt towards him all that eager jealousy which can exist so well in love without hope.

The Count de Mauvinet soon returned, and, although he little doubted that the dark masses which they had seen were, as Albert Denyn suspected, the revolted serfs, pausing only for the night in their advance to attack the very castle where he was, yet so hardened was the mind of the veteran soldier to danger, that he seemed to cast all thought of it from him, enjoyed to the full the period of refreshment and rest afforded to him, and laughed gaily over the joyous board, even while the hard hand of peril was knocking at the very gates.

Notwithstanding all Albert Denyn's unwillingness, the good old lord pressed him almost in a tone of command to relate all that had befallen him in foreign countries. Adela's sweet eyes brightened at the very thought, and the Duchess of Orleans herself added her voice, which of course was not to be refused. We must not

pause upon Albert's history. He told it as one who, having great deeds to recount, was fearful, even in seeming, to overrate his own merit. He referred, then, not to himself so much as to Captal de Buch. It was thus acted the capital here, so spoke the capital there; here were the pagans defeated, there a body of the Teutonic knights were saved.

Those who knew him well understood the whole matter; and even the Duchess of Orleans, with a woman's tact, comprehended that he might have spoken more of himself if he had so willed, while Adela, with her colour varying every moment, gazed down upon the ground, and the good old Lord of Mauvinet forced him by questions to relate a great part of that which he had withheld.

The keen eyes of the Duchess of Orleans, too, were not long in discovering more of the secrets of Albert's heart than he fancied that either word, or look, or tone displayed; and she marked, not without a certain degree of playful malice, that there were no very kindly glances passed between the young soldier and the gay

Lord of Chamblé. It might come across her mind, too — for she had many of those little faults which checker the brighter parts of woman's character—it might come across her mind, too, to give some brief pain to the heart of poor Adela de Mauvinet by coquetting with him who, she saw, was not a little loved; but better thoughts came after, and more generous feelings whispered, “This youth served and protected me, not knowing who I was, and I will reward him in the way he will best like.”

“Come hither, Albert Denyn,” she said, after supper was over, as she sat in somewhat a queenly state, with the rest of the party ranged around — “I owe you some recompence for my safe escort hither, and you shall have this string of pearls to match your golden chain. Kneel, good youth, and I will put it on. The first time you carry this through a body of the Jacques, I will ask knighthood for you at the dauphin's own hand.”

“It shall not be long, lady,” replied Albert Denyn, while the princess hung the pearls to the chain given him by the emperor; but the

duchess at the same time bent down her head, saying, in a lower tone, “Now mark, if I do not reward you better still ! so do not let idle jealousy lose you opportunity, while I sport with a fool’s vanity.”

No one but Albert heard the words which she uttered ; and he rose, and went back to his place, scarcely comprehending their meaning himself. In a few minutes, however, he saw the duchess call the attention of the Lord of Chamblé, and during the whole of the evening, ere she retired to rest, she left no fascination of tone, look, or manner untried upon the young knight to withdraw him from Adela de Mauvinet, and attach him to herself. She had not so easy a task as she had expected, however : Louis de Chamblé was not so weak as she had imagined ; and the beauty of Adela was so far superior to her own, that the vague charm of her rank was not sufficient to counterbalance the exceeding loveliness of the old seneschal’s daughter. The result was, that the princess became somewhat piqued at her own want of success, and then presuming on her station, she

exacted, but more severely, those attentions which she saw were burdensome.

Thus, from time to time, Albert Denyn had an opportunity of saying much to her he loved. On the subject of his attachment, indeed, he did not speak; but all he saw in the demeanour of Adela herself was sufficient to tell him that, as far as her affections went, he had no cause of jealousy in regard to the young Lord of Chamblé.

Thus passed the first evening in the castle of Beaumont sur Oyse; and when the duchess rose to seek repose, which was not till a late hour of the night, she laid her hand upon that of Adela, saying, “ You shall lie in my chamber, sweet lady. Fare you well, knights and gentlemen, and good dreams sit on your pillows.”

“ Albert, come with me,” said the old Lord of Mauvinet: “ you shall tell me something more of yourself ere I sleep. Good night, my Lord of Chamblé: we will talk farther on the subject of which you spoke to me this morning, when we see what to-morrow brings forth. All I

can reply at present is, you have my best wishes."

The Lord of Chamblé remained alone in the room after the others left it; and, if one might judge by the frown upon his brow, the subject of his meditations was not very pleasant. At length, however, he started from his fit of thought, and retired to his own chamber; but it was not to sleep, for there were those passions in his heart that are the bitterest foes to slumber.

CHAP. VIII.

“HE will have his best wishes!” muttered Albert Denyn to himself, meditating on what the Lord of Mauvinet had said, while, about an hour after the duchess had retired, he wandered round the dark battlements of Beaumont. All that those few words might imply, all that they might produce, came up before the mind of the young soldier, saddening his heart, and once more drowning out every spark of hope, if, indeed, he can be said to have entertained any.

“I am a fool,” he continued: “I dream of things that can never be, and then my heart is wrung to wake and find that I have been dreaming — but, hark! What is that sound? Some people speaking in the court beneath. I thought that all but the guards upon the walls were sound asleep.”

The words that were uttered below rose up

to him as he stood above, and he heard one man say to the other, “ Do not let us wait for them any longer. Go in, I say, and down the steps; we cannot lose our way, and they must come after, if they will.”

“ But are you sure that we can get out at the other end ?” demanded another voice. “ Is there no door to keep us in ?”

“ None,” answered the first, “ none, I tell you. It opens out amongst the furze bushes two hundred yards beyond the moat. Hark ! I hear the rest coming.”

“ Men deserting from the castle !” said Albert to himself— “ I must go and wake the Lord of Mauvinet; though it is better, indeed, that the cowards should be away than remain here to cast ice upon brave men’s hearts.”

Nevertheless, he turned his steps in haste towards the apartment where he had left the count; but ere he had reached the spot at which a flight of steps descended from the battlements, the young Lord of Chamblé cast himself in his way, saying, “ Stay, young man, I have a word of advice to give you.”

“ You must choose some other time, then, my lord,” replied Albert Denyn —“ at present I am in haste.”

“ And yet you must stay,” rejoined the Lord of Chamblé, in a cold, and a somewhat sneering tone. “ What I have to tell you is of moment, too ; for if you do not attend to it, you may fall into disgrace.”

“ Stand back, sir, and let me pass,” cried Albert Denyn. “ There are men deserting from the castle, and it may be my good lord’s wish to stop them.—Stand back, I say, or by the heaven above us I will cast you over into the court beneath ! Each moment, you are doing an injury you can never repair ;” and thrusting the young knight out of his way, with a force that he could not resist, Albert Denyn strode on, attending but little to the fierce mutterings of the angry noble, and soon reached the apartments of the count.

A door opening at once from the stairs led into an antechamber, where two stout yeomen slept with their bed drawn across the entrance of the inner room. It was with difficulty that

Albert Denyn woke them; but having at length, if we may use the expression, undrawn these living bolts, he entered the chamber of the count, and strove to rouse the page, who lay on a truckle-bed, at the old nobleman's feet. The boy, like the yeomen, however, tired out with a long day's march, slept like the rock on which the castle was built; and ere Albert Denyn had made the slightest progress in awakening him, the count started up, demanding, "Who is there?"

The matter was soon explained; and the count, rising at once, threw on his furred gown, exclaiming, "We must stay these cowards: they will do quite as well upon the battlements as marks for the enemy's arrows, as better men."

"I fear, my lord, it is too late," replied Albert Denyn; "for I met your good friend, the Lord of Chamblé, who would insist upon stopping me, to speak of something, I know not what, and in the mean time the mischief must have been done."

"Lead on, however," cried the old lord —

“lead on, to the spot where you heard these voices. We must see how they contrived to escape at least; for, by the duchess’s permission, I ordered all the gates to be strictly closed, and watched by my own men.”

As Albert Denyn anticipated, the court was found deserted but the path which the deserters had taken was discovered without difficulty. A large arched doorway, through which a tall horse could be led with ease, was open on the eastern side of the court; and when, by the light of torches, which were soon procured, Albert and the Lord of Mauvinet entered the passage, with which the door communicated, and advanced some fifty or sixty paces therein, they could hear the sound of horse’s feet echoing along the vault from a distance, showing that the fugitives were beyond recall.

The old lord pursued the examination, however; observing, with a grim smile, “This place may serve as an entrance for brave enemies, as well as an exit for cowardly friends.”

Various gates, and heavy doors, were found

all left wide open; and these being closed, and other precautions taken for the defence of the place, the Lord of Mauvinet and his companions returned to the court, to inquire who were the deserters, and how many effective soldiers were left within the walls. Just as they were issuing from the vault, however, they were met by the young Lord of Chamblé, who advanced furiously upon Albert Denyn, exclaiming, “Villain, you struck me! and if I live another hour I will punish you as such a presumptuous slave deserves.”

Though the blood mounted high on Albert Denyn’s cheek, and his heart burned within him, he replied calmly, though sternly, “I struck you not, my lord, though I thrust you from my way, when you stayed me in doing my duty. Villain I am none, young sir, thanks to God and the hand of the emperor; and as to presumption, I know not what you mean; for I have never presumed towards you at least.”

“My Lord of Chamblé,” cried the Count de Mauvinet, “I must beseech you to forbear. This youth is as noble in heart as any in the

land: I owe him more than life—my daughter, and my daughter's safety. Believe me, you have mistaken him: he could never intend to offend you, and only acted in haste, as no time was to be lost—he is not one to presume in any shape."

"My lord count, you are blind," replied the young knight sharply: "you see not how far he dares to presume.—Ay, sir, he does presume upon some slight services he may have rendered—he presumes, I say, to raise his insolent eyes even to your daughter, and yet you see it not."

The count gazed on the young lord's face as if struck dumb, and then turned a stern and inquiring glance upon Albert Denyn, whose cheek was very pale, and whose look was bent upon the ground.

"Speak," cried the Lord of Mauvinet, "speak, Albert. Do you not hear his charge?"

"I hear, my lord," answered Albert, "a vague charge, which implies a falsehood that it does not boldly assert. If this lord would merely say, that I love your daughter he tells the truth; for who could live with her as I have lived and not love

her? I do, my lord; I love her better than any other being, or thing, on earth—the companion of my childhood, the friend of my youth, the brightest and the best of earthly beings. But this, my lord, is a privilege of the lowest in all the land—to love and admire that which is fair and high. It is a duty of chivalry, and from such duties, I am not now, thank God, excluded. But if he would say that I love her with but one purpose or one thought that is not high and noble; if by the words, ‘raising my eyes to her,’ he means, that I aspire to that which is impossible, I tell him that he lies to his beard, and will prove it on him with ——”

“ Hush, hush !” exclaimed the Lord of Mauvinet, who had listened in stern thoughtfulness, while the young soldier spoke—“ I will not suffer such words to pass on either side; at least not in times of peril like these, when every sword is wanted against the bosoms of the enemy. My lord, you have done Albert wrong. Every one on this earth has a right to choose out his fair lady, to love and serve her by all honourable means; and the highest châtelain in all the land,

nay, the queen herself upon her throne, receives honour from the love of any gentleman, however poor his estate, provided he pass not the bounds of due respect. So say the laws of chivalry, my lord; and due respect, I am right sure, Albert Denyn will never forget towards the daughter of his friend — Nay, frown not, my good lord: I entreat you both, forbear all angry words, and all sharp discussions. He, who says one syllable more, at least till all these troubles be appeased, makes an enemy of me. Let each man honour the lady that he loves by doing great deeds in behalf of his native land; and so no more of this! — Now call all the soldiers in the castle forth, and let us see who are these runaways."

" My lord, my lord," cried a trooper, coming in breathless haste from the walls above, " there is danger abroad. The bands of villeins are advancing against the castle, I do believe, for I heard but now a rushing sound coming up from the plain. It was like the noise of a full stream, or a heavy wind blowing through a forest in the winter; and then came a sharp cry, mingled, it seemed, with groans; I fear they have come

upon some poor fellow's house, and murdered those within."

"More likely have caught the cowards who have deserted," replied the Lord of Mauvinet, "and given them due punishment for their treachery.—Away to the walls—call all the men out. Carry forth torches on the battlements, and light the beacon on the highest tower! Let them see that we are prepared for them."

Thus saying, the good seneschal strode up to the platform to look out. Albert Denyn and several others followed close upon him, but all was obscurity round about. The moon was down, not a star was in the sky. The old trees which surrounded the castle at no great distance could hardly be distinguished from the dark masses of the ground; and in vain the eye of the count plunged into the void of the night, seeking for human forms—he could discover nothing. There was a low rustle, indeed, but nothing like the voice of man met the ear; it might be the wind beginning to rise; it might be the rushing of the Oyse, heard through the stillness of the night.

“ Can you see any thing, Albert ? ” whispered the seneschal to the young man-at-arms, with his eyes bent sternly upon the darkness—“ can you see any thing ? I am blind, I think.”

Albert Denyn did not reply, but he put his hand back to one of the yeomen who stood a step behind, took the long bow of yew, which he carried from him, and said in a low voice, “ An arrow ! ”

The youth laid the feather to the string, stretched forth his left arm to its full extent, and drew his right hand to his ear. The string twanged, the arrow whizzed from the bow, and the next instant a shrill cry of agony, followed by a confused murmur and the rushing sound of many feet, rose from the other side of the moat. Almost at the same moment the flame of the beacon towered up high in the air above, and a crowd of grim faces and shadowy forms were seen, by the glare, within half a bow-shot of the walls.

“ Well done, my boy ! well done, Albert ! ” cried the seneschal : “ you have sent one of them to Satan’s kingdom, at all events.— Now, my

men, bring us up some piles of wood. We must keep up a blaze along the battlements till day-break, lest they try to take us unawares."

No attack was made, however, during the night, by the immense body of armed peasantry which now surrounded the castle. Some one of importance seemed to have been hit by Albert Denyn's shaft, and when daylight dawned, a great deal of confusion and hurrying to and fro was still remarked among them. Still it was an awful sight to see that ocean of grim faces, marked by every wild and savage passion, and that crowd of powerful forms covered with every sort of wild and unusual arms, all surrounding the castle of Beaumont, which, alas ! now numbered within its walls not more than forty persons capable of making any effectual defence.

The good Lord of Mauvinet counted his garrison over eagerly, but with an undaunted look ; and when some one said, in a low tone, " We shall never be able to keep the place," he replied, " I have fled once from them, and I will not fly again. The place is strong ; and were the women not here, I would hold it out till the very

last, and die amongst the walls, rather than abandon them. Would to God the women were not here ! they cow my heart, and make an infant of me. However, we must double our energies, and our activity. You, Albert, defend the north tower with your companion, Scroope, and four of the soldiery — It is one of the points of the greatest danger. My Lord of Chamblé, you, with your men, take the eastern side — It is scarcely less perilous than the other. Herestall, and Huguenin, you to the south tower ; the west needs no defence but its own walls. I will be with you all from time to time. There seems to be store of arrows, quarrels, and every implement of war in the place : we will have them brought up as speedily as possible, and you must pour them upon the enemy without ceasing. The duchess said there were mangonels somewhere — they might serve us bravely if we could find them. Let some one ask her, where they may be found.”

In about half an hour the attack of the castle commenced, and was met with that sort of gallant determination which renders small means

more available than the most extensive supplies in the hands of the irresolute. We will not pause, however, to detail the strife that took place, for we may have had too much of such things already. Suffice it, that it was waged with wild and savage fury on the one part, and with steady, though fiery, courage on the other, through the greater part of the day.

It is strange what companionship in such scenes of peril and exertion can do to soften animosities, and make even the fiercest passions of the human heart forget their virulence, at least for a time. Towards three o'clock, Albert Denyn perceived that the attack, which had slackened on his own side, was directed against the eastern wall, where the young lord of Chamblé had been placed, and he sent three of his men to give him aid in repelling it. Shortly after, the tide turned again, and the northern tower was once more assailed with violence. Louis of Chamblé then came round himself to ask how the day went with Albert Denyn, and to see if he could give him help in driving back the enemy.

Albert thanked him, but said no ; and pointing with his hand to a spot amidst the crowd beneath the walls, he added, “ We must all look well to ourselves now, my good lord, for the fiercest of the strife is yet to come. Do you see that man on horseback ? ”

“ Ay,” answered the young knight ; “ I saw him before, at Ermenonville. Who is he ? He seems to have just arrived.”

“ He has so, my lord,” replied Albert. “ Hitherto these fools have been knocking their heads against stone walls ; but now you will find them better directed. That is the fiend, William Caillet ! I would willingly give my right hand to-morrow morning, to be one hour with him upon the hill-side this night.”

The anticipations of Albert Denyn proved correct. The plan of the assault was immediately changed ; the northern and eastern parts of the castle of Beaumont were left, comparatively, at peace, though two strong bodies of the revolted peasantry still remained opposite to them ; but the principal attack was directed at once against the southern tower, which was a large

building lately added to the old castle of Beaumont, and connected with it by an arch over the moat, which had not yet been carried round it.

There was now no longer any wavering, any hesitation amongst the insurgents: the assault of the peasantry was not only fierce but incessant; and labouring with pickaxes and iron bars, though numbers of them fell by arrows and by stones cast down upon their heads, they succeeded in shaking the foundation of one part of the tower; and towards seven o'clock, a large portion of the wall gave way, crushing a number of assailants under it, but leaving an entrance open into the tower itself.

The Lord of Mauvinet, with one of his chief followers named Herestall, had taken the defence of that part upon themselves; but both Albert Denyn and the young Lord of Chamblé, seeing that the assault had ceased at every other point, had yielded to their impatience, and joined the party in the tower.

When the first stones were loosened from

the foundations, however, Albert Denyn had disappeared; but he returned just at the moment when, the fall of the wall being inevitable, the seneschal and the rest were retiring from the spot which had been undermined.

“ We must defend the bridge over the moat, Albert,” said the Lord of Mauvinet; “ or break it down, if it be possible.”

“ I have thought of that, my lord,” replied the youth; “ and every thing is prepared.”

“ It is very strong, is it not?” demanded the count: “ how long will it take to throw it down ?”

“ One minute, and three blows of an axe,” replied the young soldier: “ I have had the beams sawn underneath.”

“ Thanks, thanks, my dear boy,” replied the Lord of Mauvinet: “ you have saved us half a dozen lives at least.”

“ Then I beseech you let me finish the work, my lord,” replied Albert: “ I would give a year of life to strike one blow, hand to hand, with the enemy.”

“ Do it, do it, my dear boy,” said the old

lord. “There, there goes the wall!” and down it rolled in thunder.

“Away with you, away with you, over the bridge, my men,” cried the seneschal; “Albert, you and I will be the last.”

“I with you! I with you!” exclaimed the young Lord of Chamblé.

“Ay, but we are all under Albert’s command for the moment,” said the count: “he breaks down the bridge! He has won the honour well. Here, here they come! Back, back, my lord, to the bridge!—Now, Albert, now my boy, give them not too much time.—This axe is heavier than yours.”

Albert caught the ponderous weapon from the seneschal’s hand, and retreating side by side with him, he struck a blow with his full force upon the spot where he had caused the wood-work to be sawn through on one side of the bridge. A large portion of the structure, stone, and lime, and beams, and iron, plunged down in dust and ruin into the moat beneath.

“Quick, my lord, quick!” he cried; “pass over! Tread lightly, I beseech you!”

“They are breaking down the bridge, they are breaking down the bridge,” cried the voices of the peasantry, rushing up over the fallen walls of the tower.

“Out of my way, out of my way,” shouted the thundering voice of Caillet; and darting forward with the leap of a tiger, he sprang towards Albert Denyn, who stood with one foot upon the entrance of the bridge, and the other upon the threshold of the arched door-way, which led to the platform of the captured tower.

“That to send thee to hell,” cried Caillet, striking a sweeping blow with his long sword at the neck of Albert Denyn.

But the young soldier caught it upon his shield, without wavering more than if he had been struck with a willow wand; and whirling the battle-axe over his head, he dashed it with such force upon the helmet of Caillet, that driving in the steel-cap, it hurled him backwards, wounding and bleeding, into the mass of peasantry that were following close behind. With one bound, Albert Denyn then sprang across the bridge, and two more blows upon

the wood-work of the ruined arch placed a yawning chasm between the southern tower and the old castle of Beaumont.

A flight of arrows, which told sadly amongst the peasantry in the tower, now poured upon them from the walls of the castle; and in a few minutes after, the part of the building they had gained was abandoned by the Jacques, who retired, carrying with them—apparently with much care—one of their wounded leaders to a group of trees at some little distance. The rest of the insurgent force around the castle remained firm, but did not renew the attack; and as Albert Denyn, with a feeling of proud satisfaction at his heart, stood leaning on the battle-axe which had done such good service, and gazing out upon the dark masses of the enemy, the good Lord of Mauvinet grasped him by the hand, saying, “I trust you have killed the villain, Albert. I never yet beheld a better blow; but come, they will do no more to-night, and we all want refreshment. We will place a watch upon the walls, and see for some wine and meat.”

Thus speaking, the old nobleman turned away, and descended to the hall ; but Albert Denyn remained upon the battlements, musing deeply and sadly upon the fruitlessness of all that he could do to remove the original stain of his birth. After pausing for about half an hour, he sent down for some food, saying that he wished to remain on the walls and watch ; and it was there that he saw the dull shades of night creep on once more upon the grey and heavy sky.

He was sitting thus, upon one of the stone benches of the parapet, when the young Lord of Chamblé approached the spot where he had placed himself, and said, “ I have come to seek you myself, for your noble friend, the Lord of Mauvinet, wishes to speak with you.”

Albert rose in silence and followed him ; and as they passed through one of the stone passages where there was a torch, he saw the eye of the young nobleman fixed upon him with a look of much interest, though there was still some sternness mixed with it. What was to come next Albert Denyn did not know ; but it is only

people of unsteady minds that are ever taken by surprise; men of strong principles are always prepared.

On entering the hall, he found the Lord of Mauvinet alone: his sword, unbuckled, lay upon the table before him, and there was an expression of stern sadness about him which was soon explained. He held out his hand to Albert Denyn, who kissed it affectionately, and the seneschal then said, “Albert, my mind is made up, never to yield the castle of Beaumont. I will hold it out to the last; but, as I told you this morning, the thought that there are four women in it, and one of them so high in rank, hangs like a weight upon me. I have determined to send them away: I have spoken to the duchess, and she consents. They must have a small guard; and your hand, which has so often defended and delivered Adela, must protect her now.”

Albert Denyn cast himself upon his knee before his ancient master:—“My lord, I do beseech you,” he cried, “let me stay with you; let me stay and share your fate, whatever it may

be — to die with you, if God wills it so, and if not, to live and share your glory. Hear me, my lord, hear me. I know that the task you would give me is one of danger, honour, and high esteem ; but here is this noble gentleman standing beside you, much more worthy of the distinction than I am ; fitted in all respects to give protection to the Lady Adela, and doubtless desirous to show what great deeds he can do in her defence. Let him go upon this generous task, my lord, which befits him far better than it does me, while I, a poor adventurer, without home or name, remain to do what is indeed my duty, and defend, with my heart's blood, that good old master, to whom I owe every thing from childhood until now.”

The tears came into the old seneschal’s eyes, and he laid his hand fondly on Albert’s head, saying, “ God bless you, my son ; but it must not be. You know that I value my children more than my own life ; and if I should die, you will live to be the defence and prop of my son, who, thank God, is safe, as yet, in Touraine. You will not refuse to go with Adela, Albert :

this noble lord accompanies you ; and to your mutual care and honour I confide both her and that high lady who takes part in the journey. Fear not for me, Albert. I doubt not to hold out the castle till help arrives ; the more so, indeed, now that other tower is gone. With our small means it was but an encumbrance, and it can do nothing now against us."

" But, my lord," replied Albert Denyn, " we take men from you."

" Not half so many as were required to defend that tower," replied the old lord. " I shall give you but four — your companion Scroope and three others. You two will make six ; there are four women, ten in all."

" But think you, my lord," said Albert, " that we shall be able to cut our way through, with so small a force ? "

" You must not make the attempt," replied the old lord : " our sally from Ermenonville has put them upon their guard ; but the passage, the passage under ground, my dear boy : the duchess has shown me where it issues forth. It is to the right there, far beyond their line

— at least beyond where their line was when the sun set.”

“ Then why not come yourself, my lord,” said Albert: “ let us all abandon the castle : you cannot be expected —”

“ No, no,” cried the veteran soldier, “ I have fled once, I will not fly twice for all the Jacques in Brie — Not a word more, my boy. Guide the ladies all safe to Meaux ; the market-place there is impregnable ; then send me help as speedily as possible. But remember, both of you, young men,” he continued, “ that the safety of those who are dearest to me may be fatally compromised, if there be still one thought of misunderstanding between you.”

“ There shall be none on my part, noble count,” replied the young Lord of Chamblé, holding out his hand frankly to Albert Denyn. “ I find I have mistaken him ; and if we must still be rivals, our rivalry, for the time, at least, shall consist alone in seeing who can do most to guide, defend, and comfort the ladies committed to our charge. What say you ? do you pledge yourself to this ?”

“ By my honour and hopes of heaven,” replied Albert Denyn, grasping the hand the other gave him. — “ When shall we set out, my lord ?”

“ Some two hours hence,” answered the Count de Mauvinet. “ They will all then be asleep, Nevertheless, you must proceed with great caution. Let one go out first, to make sure that there is no party beyond the mouth of the vault. If he do not come back or give a signal, the rest can follow. In the mean time, I will send some flights of arrows amongst them from the other side, so as to create confusion in that quarter.”

“ In an hour and a half, my lord, then, I will be ready,” said Albert Denyn, “ and yet I would fain stay ; but I will obey you in this also, and, if I live, will bring you succour ere three days be over. Fare you well then, for the present, my lord : I will go and watch those men. This night is somewhat lighter than the last, and I should much fear for the result of our expedition, did I not trust, that the head which was most likely to watch for our de-

struction lies on an aching pillow, with no great power to rise."

"Ay, or on a still one, from which it will never rise again," replied the Lord of Mauvinet.

As Albert Denyn had said, the night was somewhat clearer, and his last look from the battlements ere he descended to the court-yard at the appointed hour showed him that, as before, the principal body of the insurgents lay before the great gates of the castle, while another smaller party, but still some thousands strong, were pressed close round a postern to the east, by which they doubtless thought that an escape might be attempted.

"Keep the torches moving quickly round the walls," said Albert to one of the sentinels on guard; and then, mounting to the beacon tower, he bade the man slacken the flame a little, saying, "Our good lord is going to give them soon a flight or two of arrows."

After one more glance towards the fields, he descended, and found all prepared. Adela and the duchess, with two other women, ap-

peared a moment or two after ; the first with her countenance very pale, the second preserving the same light, and somewhat careless bearing, which she had always hitherto maintained.

“ Here, young gentleman,” she said, as soon as she saw Albert — “ tell your sweet friend, here, that there is not so much danger as she fancies. Me she will not believe.”

“ I trust that there is not much danger, indeed,” replied Albert ; “ for if we find that there is any one near the sally-port, or whatever it may be, at the end of the vault, we can but retreat to the castle again, and my good lord will keep some one there to give us admission.”

“ I will, I will,” replied the old Lord of Mauvinet ; “ but I will see you forth myself. Now lead the horses.—Do you know, madam,” he continued, speaking to the duchess, “ whether the roof rises, so that you can mount before you issue forth ? ”

“ Oh yes, my lord,” she replied — “ there are some fifty yards of a dark sort of cavern in the rock, beyond the last gate ; one can mount

there.—My Lord of Chamblé, you are my knight for the time; you shall win high thanks if you bring me safe to Meaux."

Thus speaking, she led the way onward through the vault, lighted by a single torch, with the horses brought after. The Lord of Mauvinet paused for a moment, to give some orders for diverting the attention of the insurgents to the other side of the castle, and then followed quickly. The vault was long, and not a word was spoken: the hearts of all there present were too full for words. At length, however, they reached the last door, and entered the natural cavern.

"Farewell, my lord," said the duchess, extending her hand to the count. The old seneschal pressed his lips upon it, and then casting his arms round his daughter, he held her to his heart with a long and a close embrace. Adela's tears fell quick upon his cheek, as he bent to kiss her; and, feeling that it was too much for either of them to speak, he lifted her on her horse in silence.

"Albert," said the count, in a low, but

solemn voice, grasping the young soldier's hand, "Albert, I trust her to you, with but one injunction — mark, you obey it ! Should you all be made prisoners by these slaves, let her not fall alive into their hands. You understand me. Slay her, if you love her. Slay her, as I would slay her ; and her spirit and mine will thank you for it in heaven."

"I will give her my dagger, my lord," replied Albert, calmly : "I shall be dead, ere then !"

CHAP. IX.

“I CANNOT follow them so fast, Albert, I cannot follow them so fast: my horse is very lame, and will not go on.”

“ Yet a little while, dear lady, yet a little while: I fear we are not past all danger yet. Their bands stretch out far and wide around the castle, and methinks I see a light yonder which may belong to them. Stay, I will dismount and look what is the matter; perhaps it may be a stone in the beast’s foot.”

It was in vain, however, that Albert Denyn examined; no stone could he find; but still the horse went lame, and could not keep up with the rest.

“ What is the matter? ” demanded the voice of the duchess, as she remarked a pause, and some confusion.

“ The lady’s horse, madam, is lame,” replied

Albert, “ and cannot follow you so fast; and yet I am afraid that by any delay we may endanger your safety.”

“ We must have passed all danger now,” said the princess. “ There is a light down there — from some peasant’s cottage, doubtless. Let us turn our steps thither, and examine what is the matter with the beast.”

“ Madam,” replied Albert, “ your security must be the first thing thought of. Let the lady’s saddle be put upon my horse — I will follow you on foot.”

“ Nay, nay,” cried the princess, “ that shall never be ! Take her behind you, good youth. Make a pillion of your cloak ; but first let us see what yon light is. We must have gone near two leagues by this time, and I have no fear.”

Thus saying, and without waiting for reply, she turned her rein in the direction of the light, and rode on with the young Lord of Chamblé. It soon became evident that they were approaching some huts ; but before she reached them, Albert Denyn spurred on, and laid his hand upon her bridle, saying, “ I beseech

you, madam, let me go forward first on foot—I hear voices speaking. Here, Scroope, hold my rein for a moment, and for Heaven's sake make up a pillion for the Lady Adela behind my saddle. I will be back in an instant, madam ; but if you hear me shout loudly, ride on with all speed, and leave me to my fate."

As he spoke, Albert dismounted and advanced towards the light ; but when he came nearer to the hut, he could distinguish that the sounds which had met his ear as he rode up were those of complaint and pain.

The cabins were few in number ; all were dark save one, and, by the rays that issued from it, Albert gazed around, but could see no human being near. He approached close to the door, and listened ; but the first thing that broke the silence was merely a groan of anguish.

" Ah, that does me good to hear," said a shrill voice. " It is medicine to me, it is balm ; but yet I would fain have a drop of water. They have all left me, and they think I will die ; but they are mistaken. Woman, give me a drop of water, and I vow you shall go free : I kept

you from them to be my paramour ; but if you will give me a cup of water, I promise you shall go free."

Another deep groan from a spot near broke in upon what he was saying, and then a sweet-toned woman's voice, full of deep sadness, replied, " How can I give thee water with my hands tied ? Think you that if I could give it to any one, it would not be to my own father, whom you have so inhumanly mangled ? "

" Fiend, give me water," cried the same voice, frantically ; " or when my men come, I will make them dishonour thee before his eyes."

A low sob was the only reply, and Albert Denyn, re-assured, thrust open the door and entered.

The scene was a strange and horrible one, as ever war with all its horrors presented. Cast down in one corner of the hut lay the mangled form of a tall and powerful man, past the middle age ; whose dress, though torn and dabbled with blood, bespoke high rank and station. His armour had been stripped off, except the greaves, which were still upon his legs, while both his

arms, from the way in which they lay, seemed to be broken. Crouching on the ground near him, with her hands tied behind her back, and gazing upon him with a look full of deep but agonised affection, was a beautiful girl, of perhaps nineteen years of age, who seemed to have suffered no violence, though her robe was spotted with drops of blood, which probably had flowed from the dying man beside her.

A resin torch was stuck in one corner of the hut, and by its light was seen, on the other hand, a low bed piled up with straw, over which was cast a rich crimson cloak. Thereon was stretched the lean and withered form of old Thibalt la Rue, with an arrow still left plunged in his right side, just beneath the arm, which seemed to keep him in great torture, and prevent him from moving hand or foot without pain.

As may be well supposed, all the eyes of those within the cabin were instantly turned upon the opening door; and when the fine majestic form of the young soldier appeared, covered with his coat of arms, a look of

terror passed over the fiend-like countenance of the old man, while a cry of joy burst from the lips of the fair girl at the other side of the hut.

“ It is a gentleman, my father,” she cried.
“ Oh God, it is a gentleman come to help us.”

The dying man strove to turn, but could not, and Albert Denyn instantly advancing, cut the cord that tied the lady’s hands. Without a pause, she started to a table, on which stood a cup of water, and brought it to her father’s lips ; while Albert gazed earnestly upon him, saying, “ Surely I have seen your face before. Is it possible that I behold my good Lord of St. Leu ? ”

“ Yes, yes ! ” cried the wounded nobleman, his lips now moistened and refreshed, “ and you are the man of all others I would see. Take care of my daughter, good youth. Convey her safely to the Captal de Buch : she has a packet for him in her bosom, which he will give much to have. Away with her, quick ! Mind not me. Thank God ! she is unpolluted as yet. I trust her to your honour. Away ! away ”

His mind, occupied by one all-engrossing

thought, evidently took into consideration nothing else; but the poor girl again cast herself on her knees beside him, exclaiming, “I cannot, I will not leave you! Oh my father, let me stay and die beside you.”

“Give me some drink! give me some drink!” shrieked the voice of the old man from the other bed. “Monsters, will you not give me some drink? May hell seize upon you all!”

No one attended to him, however—the hour of retribution was come—and the agony he had so often inflicted upon others now fell upon himself.

“I know not how I can save her,” said Albert Denyn, speaking in a low voice to the Lord of St. Leu; “we are ourselves embarrassed for chargers. One has fallen lame, and —”

“There must be horses near,” replied the dying man. “Our own cannot be far off. They pursued us as we were trying to escape towards Paris: they caught us not far from this spot, and our beasts must be here.—Take her! take her quick!”

“Stay,” cried Albert, “I will go and see what can be done.”

Thus saying, he left the hut, and found that the Duchess of Orleans and her party had gradually advanced to within a few steps of the spot where it stood. To her and the rest he explained briefly what he had seen. The other hovels were searched immediately, and in one of them three or four horses were found, with a young peasant of some twelve years old dressed in the rich embroidered suit which had once covered a nobleman’s son, sound asleep on some straw in a corner of this temporary stable. The boy was roused and tied hand and foot, and two fresh horses were brought forth for Adela and Margaret of St. Leu. There was a third powerful beast, which had evidently been the charger of a man-at-arms; and a vague hope of being able to save the Lord of St. Leu himself crossed the mind of the young soldier, as he turned back with Scroope and another to the little hut. The moment he entered, the voice of the old man

Thibalt assailed him, calling him by name, and beseeching him to bring him water.

“ If you will give me but one drop, Albert Denyn,” he said, “ I will tell you a secret you would cut off your right hand to hear ! ”

“ Albert Denyn ! ” cried the young lady of St. Leu, looking at him. “ Are you Albert Denyn ? — Give him some water.”

The youth took the cup and filled it from a jar that stood near. The unfortunate wretch clutched it eagerly and drank, and then exclaimed, “ More, give me more ! ”

“ What is your secret, then ? ” demanded Albert Denyn.

“ Listen, listen,” said the old man.

The youth put down his ear, and Thibalt whispered a word which made the light flash from the young soldier’s eyes.

“ Give me more drink,” cried Thibalt, seeing the effect that he had produced, “ give me more drink, and I will tell thee all.”

Albert turned eagerly to seek it; but at that moment the young Lord of Chamblé entered

the place, and his eyes fell at once upon old Thibalt de la Rue.

“ Ha !” he exclaimed. “ This is the darkest fiend of them all ! — Lying on my murdered brother’s cloak too ! — Down to hell, old monster !” and ere Albert Denyn could stop him, he had driven his dagger into Thibalt’s heart. With a yell, a gasp, and a fearful contortion, the wretched old man gave up his spirit to its terrible account.

“ My lord, you have stopped words I would have given a world to hear,” cried Albert Denyn ; “ but it is done, and cannot now be helped.— Dear lady,” he continued, turning to the Lord of St. Leu’s daughter, “ perhaps we may be able to carry your father with us, if we be not sharply pursued. If he can sit upon a horse at all, I and another will support him in our arms.”

“ God of heaven reward you !” cried the girl. “ I will reward you, too. — Father, dear father, do you hear him ?” and she again turned to gaze into her parent’s face.

The wounded man made no reply. The eyes

were fixed and glassy : there was a grey shade over the whole countenance ; and Albert Denyn, starting forward, gazed at him intently for a moment. He took her hand, saying, "Lady, come away ! Your cares are fruitless."

"One moment," she said, in a calmer tone than he expected — "but one moment," and bending down her head, she pressed her lips upon the cold brow of her dead father.

"Now," she continued, "now I am ready. I have no right to keep you longer."

Her eyes were dry, but an unwonted drop glistened on the lids of Albert Denyn as he said, "Alas, poor lady ! Would that we could have saved him."

She gave him a grateful look, but made no reply ; and he led her out, accompanied by the rest, one of the rude soldiers, before they went, spurning the body of Thibalt de la Rue from the straw on which it was stretched, and spreading the cloak over the dead form of the Lord of St. Leu. But few words more were spoken, and none that it may be necessary to repeat ; for the recognition of Adela and Mar-

garet of St. Leu was too full of sad feelings on both parts to admit of conversation. The saddle was changed from the horse which had fallen lame to one of those which had been brought out of the hut, the young lady of St. Leu was placed upon another, and the party once more proceeded in the darkness. Two of the troopers lingered for a moment or two, indeed, and then came up at a quick pace; but Albert Denyn had heard a sharp cry and a groan behind them, and he turned sharply to one of the men, saying, "You have not hurt the boy?"

"Out upon the wolf's whelp!" was the only reply; and Albert very well divined the fate of the unfortunate lad who had been left by the insurgents to guard the horses. It did not surprise him; for such was the merciless conduct of each party to the other, in the fearful strife that was then going on, that no one could hope for pity if he fell into the hands of the enemy.

It may be easily imagined that the journey was a painful one to all. Apprehension,

indeed, decreased every minute, as mile after mile was placed between them and the castle of Beaumont. But there was scarcely one person present who had not some deep cause for care or for sorrow in his breast; and the lightest hearted of the cavalcade seemed to be the Duchess of Orleans herself, who led the way with the young Lord of Chamblé, talking almost gaily, and keeping him constantly by her side.

Margaret of St. Leu, Albert Denyn, and Adela de Mauvinet followed, while between the two latter existed those deep feelings of anxiety and grief for the same objects, and from the same causes, which, like almost every other circumstance that had taken place in their mutual lives, were calculated to draw their hearts closer and closer together, and to render the love which was in the bosom of each unchangeable and eternal. They spoke but little in words, it is true; but their thoughts spoke, and each, in mind, was conversing with the other.

At length, as the grey streaks in the sky told the approach of day, Adela addressed her

companion in a low voice, saying, “Where do you think you can obtain help for my father?”

“I know but one place,” replied Albert Denyn, “in which it can be found, and but one person capable of giving it — Paris, and the king of Navarre. As soon as you are safe in Meaux, I must hasten to the king — some other messenger must also be sent; for I risk my liberty by going, and may be arrested before I reach him.”

“Oh, he will give no aid,” cried Adela. “My father is of the regent’s party, and Charles the Bad hates him bitterly; but the Captal de Buch — Albert, where is the captal?”

“By this time he must be in France,” answered Albert Denyn. “But, alas! dear lady, he had but sixteen men with him! all the rest were left behind to aid the Teutonic knights: — the dauphin is powerless, and there is no time to be lost.”

“I fear there is not,” said Adela, “I fear there is not, indeed. Oh, tell me the truth, Albert, tell me the whole truth. My father put on a face of hope and confidence,

and said he could hold out the castle for a week. But I heard something of one of the towers being taken."

" That is no disadvantage, dear lady," replied Albert. " The tower was a weak point, rather than a defence. We have broken down the bridge between it and the castle, and, as they have no machines of war it gives them no assistance. I trust your father may hold out for a week, perhaps for longer; the more so, as I believe that villain Caillet — who, from his talent, is more to be dreaded than all the rest — is at least disabled for a time. If his casque had not been of the best tried steel, he would have been a corpse ere now. As it was, the battle-axe must have reached his head; for I saw the blood start as he fell."

" God forgive me that I must rejoice," said Adela, " at any man's sufferings."

" I think he is dead, lady," joined in one of the troopers who was riding near; " for I beheld the blow given, and he went down much like a dead man."

" No, no," answered Albert Denyn — " he

died not on the spot; for I afterwards saw him walk to the rear, supported by two of his base companions; but, for a time at least, I trust that he is disabled. That old man, too, cannot direct them now; and he was as shrewd a miscreant as ever lived. It was a serviceable bow that sent that arrow to his breast."

"I rather think it was your own, Master Albert," replied the soldier who had previously spoken; "for that young wolf told us, before Peter cut his throat, that the old knave was wounded by an arrow, shot in the darkness of the night, on their very first arrival under Beaumont."

"That is strange, indeed," said Albert Denyn; and after a moment's musing he added, — "Let us hope for the best, dear lady. Look where the sun is rising brightly; so may a better day rise for us all!"

"God grant it!" cried Adela; "God grant it!" And she turned her glistening eyes on him who spoke, with a look which ~~seemed~~ to say, that if her day was to be bright, his happiness must have a share in making it so. "But still,

Albert," she continued, "still some aid must be sought for my father. Whither shall we turn for that?"

"If the capital has not passed on yet to Paris," replied Albert, "he cannot be very far distant. I know the road he is to take; I will seek him, and ask his counsel. Perhaps we can raise men; call the nobles to arms throughout the country, and march against these savages at once. But, lo! surely those are the buildings of Meaux. Two hours more will bring us thither."

Adela looked forward, and saw at the edge of the plain that they were now traversing some tall towers and spires, with several glistening pieces of water; but, why she could not tell, her bosom did not experience that joy which the sensation of renewed security generally inspires. She asked herself what next was to happen; and felt that, if the heart be prophetic, no great happiness awaited her there.

After a pause of about an hour, in a small town not far from the spot where Meaux first appeared to their eyes, they again re-

newed their journey, and entered the city about mid-day. There were many people in the streets, and a number more came out to gaze upon them as they passed; but Albert Denyn could not help thinking that he saw some scowling malevolence in the eyes of the citizens. Opposite the principal church, however, they were met by the mayor, to whom the Duchess of Orleans was known, and to whom she had sent forward a messenger from their last halting place. He received her with fawning smiles, and lowly inclinations of the head, and besought her to take up her residence in the town-house, at least for a time; but while they were yet parleying on the subject, a messenger arrived in breathless haste, saying, "That the young Duchess of Normandy, having heard of her fair aunt's arrival, had sent him to beg that she would join her instantly in the great market-place, where she and some other persons of quality were then residing."

The duchess rode on accordingly; and Albert Denyn followed with the rest, thinking it not

a little strange to hear that the wife of the dauphin, the regent of the kingdom, should be making her abode in the *market-place* of Meaux. As they rode on, however, and passed over the old bridge across the river Marne, he perceived the meaning of that term which he had before not understood. The stream of the Marne itself flowed between the city and the market-place, which was situated on an island, formed by the river and by a deep and broad canal. A number of fine edifices surrounded the square where the weekly markets were held, and these buildings were protected by walls, towers, and ditches, like a regular fortress. The fortifications, indeed, did not embrace the whole of the island, the unenclosed space being covered by green pasture, upon which some cattle and sheep were feeding peacefully.

At the fortified gate of the market-place, when the fugitives from Beaumont arrived there, stood two men at arms, and two or three domestic servants, as it appeared; and when the great doors were thrown open, and Albert Denyn, together with the rest of the troop,

followed the Duchess of Orleans in, the first object that his eyes lighted upon was the young Duchess of Normandy, with a number of other ladies and female attendants, come forth to greet her noble relation; but he was surprised to see only two or three pages, and still fewer serving men, without a single knight or man-at-arms to give them protection.

The two ladies embraced eagerly, and continued in conversation for some time, while the gentlemen who had accompanied the Duchess of Orleans remained at some little distance. At length, the princess beckoned to Albert Denyn, and he could see at his approach that her face was graver than he had beheld it before.

“ You are weary, and well nigh exhausted,” said the duchess; “ and yet, good youth, I doubt not that you will undertake to ride forth again within an hour, to do good service both to me and the lady that you love.”

“ I proposed, madam,” replied Albert, “ but to feed my horse, and to set out, in order to rejoin the noble Captal de Buch, and lead him to the deliverance of the Lord of Mauvinet.”

The lady paused, thoughtfully, and then said, “ Well, that must do. Can you trust the man Scroope to deliver a message faithfully ? ”

“ I think I can, madam,” replied Albert Denyn. “ But let me hear its nature.”

“ The message I would send,” answered the duchess, “ is to the regent, now at Montereaux. I would have him told, that, left well nigh defenceless as we are, we doubt the faith of the people of Meaux ; and that, notwithstanding all the oaths and protestations of John Soulard and his companions, we believe him to be a knave, and that they mean to play us false. We would beseech the dauphin to return directly with force to deliver us, or worse may come of it. Now, good youth, take the man Scroope with you — you will find fresh horses in the stable. You can either trust him to seek the capital, and go on with the message to the regent, or you can send him to the regent, and seek the capital yourself. But I will tell you, that he who bears this message to the dauphin will meet the best reward in the regent’s power to bestow.”

“ Madam,” replied Albert Denyn, “ Scroope’s path and mine will lie for some way together. Perhaps I may meet the captal, ere we are obliged to separate; for that noble lord comes by Provins and Melun. But if we are forced to part, believe me, madam, by all I hold most dear, I will do that which in my poor judgment seems at the time best calculated to bring you speedy aid; for if I judge rightly, the Lord of Mauvinet can make good his part much longer than you could do here with the very few men you have about you.”

“ There are some soldiers, sir, on the walls,” answered the Duchess of Normandy; “ but, alas! they are not many.”

“ No time is then to be lost, your highness,” replied Albert Denyn: “ I will go forth at once.”

“ At least take some refreshment,” said the duchess. “ Happily we have abundance here; though, alas! each meal that we eat we know not but it may be the last. There are plenty of fresh horses too in the stables.”

Albert was turning away; but the Duchess

of Orleans followed him a step, and then said, in a low voice, “Your devotion pleases me, sir, and is worthy of high reward. In those points that you hold most dear, I will take care that you shall not lose by your absence. Though the page was not happy that loved the lady of high degree, yet there are times and seasons when the differences of station are swept away, and when bold love, if joined with valour and with virtue, may be successful. Say a word to your fair lady before you go. Ask her if she have a token to send to her father — and now fare you well.—My Lord of Chamblé,” she continued, raising her voice, “I would speak with you for a moment. You must conduct our defence for us here in case of need, for we have great fear of these men of Meaux.”

The young nobleman advanced; but Albert Denyn stopped him for a moment as he passed, saying, “Farewell, my lord: perhaps we may never meet again; but I know I leave the Lady Adela under the protection of a good knight, and a strong sword. I think you

neard what her father said to me, as we parted. I trust that task to you, should such a dreadful day ever come ; and I beseech you, and this noble lady also, to take care of that poor forlorn girl, whose father we saw expire last night."

A few words to Adela, and a few to the orphan lady of St. Leu, were all that Albert Denyn indulged in ; and then explaining to Scroope the task that was given them, he sought fresh horses in the stables of the market-place, and passing over the bridge, issued forth again from the town of Meaux.

CHAP. X.

IF in this earth on which we live, and this state of mortal being, a foretaste of that hell which evil actions prepare for men hereafter be allowed to visit the bosoms of the wicked, it must surely be when, in the struggle against virtue and right, they find themselves baffled and overthrown; when they see that holy obedience to God's high will, which they contemned as pusillanimous or scoffed at as feeble, triumphing, in the power of wisdom and the might of justice, over their furious weakness and their foolish cunning.

That foretaste of hell was in the heart of William Caillet, when, after having been dashed backward amongst his blood-thirsty followers by the hand of the youth he affected to scorn and despise, he was led away from the southern tower of the castle of Beaumont, bleeding, dizzy, and baffled.

Ere he could recover his recollection, Jacques Morne and another had drawn him not only away from the tower, but to a considerable distance from the fortress itself, out of the reach of the missiles which from time to time were poured from the walls. The peasantry gazed at him as he moved slowly along, with anxiety and wonder. This was the first time that they had ever seen him wounded; and as his fiery courage had led him into the very front on every occasion of danger and strife, they had become possessed with a superstitious notion that he was invulnerable. His superiority of mind, his powers of language, his fierce daring, the calm, deliberate cruelty with which he committed, or ordered, barbarous acts, which the others performed when maddened by excited passions, his continual success, and his thirst, as it were, for strife and bloodshed, had all convinced them that he was of a different kind of being from themselves; and, as there is always some justice in the appreciation of character by multitudes, however rude, the revolted peasantry imagined that their leader, if not absolutely a

fiend, was endowed by the spirits of darkness with supernatural powers.

As Caillet recovered, in some degree, from the first effects of the blow, he saw the dismayed and wondering eyes that turned upon him; and feeling that unless he made a great effort, a part of the influence of his character would be lost with the people, he exclaimed, in his short, stern manner, “ No farther ! ” and pushing from him on either side the men who were supporting him, he drew himself to his full height, and spreading out his shoulders, took in a deep, long breath.

The next moment, feeling that his strength was indeed gone for the time, he sat down upon the ground to hide his weakness, and in a full and yet powerful voice said to Jacques Morne, “ Take off my casque ; — bring me a bucket full of water.”

The casque was soon removed ; and looking at the deep rent through the steel, as he held it on his knee, without attempting to stop the blood that continued flowing from his forehead, he continued to those around, “ The blade

must have been enchanted that struck that blow.—The tower, however, is ours. I knew that something must be paid for it, and it is well worth a few drops of blood.—Let it flow, let it flow,” he continued, removing the hand of one of the men who attempted to stanch it with some bandages of linen which had been brought to the spot : “ when enough has come, I will stop it myself. Did not somebody tell me, when I came up a few hours ago, that old Thibalt had been wounded by an arrow last night ? ”

“ Yes,” replied one of the men with a sarcastic grin ; “ and he caused himself to be removed to a hut a mile or two behind, where he had laid a trap for the old Lord of St. Leu and the Lady Magaret, whom he intends to keep for his paramour.

“ If he can think of paramours,” answered Caillet, “ he cannot be badly hurt, and must come up to-morrow to bear his share in the day’s work. I intend to take the castle before noon. We have done enough for one day.—Now, Morne, dip the bandages in the water; bind them round my head.—Withdraw the men a little

distance from the walls, as the sun is going down; but mind that they keep close together, and lie shoulder to shoulder through the night, that we may have no more escaping as at Ermenonville. I will go to yon cottage, and have an hour or two's sleep. I have had none for many a day. Come with me, Morne, for a while: I would speak to you as we go.—I expect great tidings and great deeds to-morrow, my friends," he continued, turning to the peasantry who stood near; " and if my mind does not deceive me, I shall lead you to a higher enterprise than any you have yet undertaken. Wake me if any thing happens, or if any messenger arrives; and an hour before daylight send a messenger to old Thibalt, bidding him come up by dawn."

Thus saying, Caillet turned and walked away; proceeding with a firm strong step, an upright mien, and unchanged demeanour, till he had passed the greater part of the peasantry. He then, however, took Jacques Morne's arm, leant heavily upon it, and when he had reached the cottage, he cast himself down in a bed, in the right-hand room, with a deep groan.

“ What can I get you, Caillet ? ” said Jacques Morne : “ you are badly hurt.”

“ No, no,” he replied, “ I am not. I shall be well to-morrow : my head aches with the blow, that is all. Bring me plenty of water to keep these bandages wet.—Put a man to guard the door.—Let me hear every thing that happens during the night ; and, now leave me.”

It was about two o’clock in the morning, when Caillet, who had at length fallen asleep, was roused by some one bringing him in letters. A torch was soon procured, and he read the contents eagerly, and with a smile of triumph. Then turning to the messenger he said, “ You come from Paris yourself ? ”

The man bowed his head ; and Caillet continued, “ Well, take some short rest. Go back and tell Vaillant and Giles that I will not fail them. I will be there to a moment, with twenty thousand men. I have no materials here, or I would write ; but you know what to say, and will say it exactly.”

The messenger retired ; and Caillet asked those who had brought him in, whether any

thing had occurred in the neighbourhood of the castle.

“ Nothing,” replied the man: “ nothing could happen. There is not room for a mouse to creep out of it between our men. They discharged a flight of arrows, indeed, about midnight; but without effect.”

Caillet started up off the bed, and gazed in the face of the man who spoke. “ A flight of arrows at midnight!” he exclaimed — “ that was not without its purpose. We shall hear more anon. Where lies Jacques Morne? Bring the casque after me; but stay, give me a cup of wine.”

While the peasant was seeking in the other chamber of the cottage for the wine that Caillet demanded, there were voices heard at the door, and the insurgent leader went out himself to see who it was.

“ Here is bad news, Caillet,” said Jacques Morne, who was one of the speakers. “ Old Thibalt is dead !”

“ Then death be his paramour !” cried Caillet, with a bitter and a somewhat wild laugh. “ What

had the old dry lath to do with paramours?—I wonder if his inquisitive mind have found the way to hell yet?—It was no bad hand that shot that arrow. That old man would have made mischief amongst us, Morne. He could not be honest even with his brethren.”

“ It was not the arrow killed him,” replied Morne, in a low tone. “ There was a dagger wound in his heart; and a horse-boy, who was found dying, said that there had been several women and five or six men there, mounted on strong horses. They stabbed old Thibalt, and cut the boy’s throat, it seems; but he is still living, if you would ask him any farther questions.—I fear, Caillet, that they have escaped from the castle; for the boy heard one of them call another, Albert Denyn, and they spoke about going to Meaux—yet how they got out I cannot tell; for, on my life, they must have marched across our bodies.”

“ Ha, ha, ha !” laughed Caillet, with a wild, fiendish, mocking laugh: “ they will make me hunt them throughout all France; but so shall we find the richer castles and towns to plunder,

and the more of these locust nobles to destroy.—Meaux, gone to Meaux, have they? Well, then, we will go to Meaux too.—Go, go, Morne, go! Gather all the people together where I can speak to them. Get the men of influence in the front. I have great news for them, Morne; so let the tidings of the principal people having escaped from the castle spread among them. I will be there by day-break."

As soon as Morne was gone Caillet quaffed off the cup of wine that the peasant brought him; and then sitting down, leaned his head upon his hands, muttering to himself, "How it aches! Nor are my thoughts so clear as they used to be. I wonder why images that one would banish will return to plague us—I, who can command thousands of men, cannot I command these phantoms, these creatures of my own brain?—That old man!—That Walleran Urgel, that I slew in the wood!—That daughter of the Lord of Plessis, that I spurned away from me to the blood-hounds that followed! and the little children too! I can see them standing, pale, at the other side of the

room. How she did shriek when the men seized her!—Hark, she is shrieking still!—No! all is silence. The cry was in my own heart!

“But,” he continued, “this is frenzy. I will go forth: the cool air will calm my brain. See, there is the grey morning.—Hark ye without there, bring my casque after me, and a lance;” and thus saying, he wandered forth with his eyes bent upon the ground.

As soon as the sun had fully risen, a large body of the peasantry had been gathered together upon the slope descending from the castle. They were not all there, although William Caillet had demanded that all should be collected; but it was in vain, with the mixed, undisciplined, many-passioned crowd, without any law, or recognised authority whatsoever, to attempt a universal movement. General impulses might be given, carrying a great majority in a particular way; but the leaders had always found that there were numbers, not absolutely dissentient, but who straggled away to some other object, in spite

of all that could be done to keep them together.

Such, then, was the case on the present occasion. Some fifteen or sixteen thousand men were collected, however; and amongst them, all those who generally led the rest, receiving their directions from Caillet himself. Some standing, some sitting, some lying on the grass, now waited for his coming with not a little impatience; for the tidings had been spread amongst them that the principal persons who had been in the castle of Beaumont on the preceding day had made their escape during the night, and also that some great enterprise was about to be proposed to them. They had just arrived at that period of the insurrection when the first ardour of their furious outbreak began to die away, and some new stimulus, some great object, was wanting to call forth again the same terrible energies which they had at first displayed.

At length there came a murmur from the side of the castle next to the gate, and, in a minute after, Caillet appeared amongst them;

the impression of his presence being rather heightened than diminished, by the sternness of his pale and dark, but magnificent, countenance, and by the bloody bandages that wrapped his brow.

He paused and looked around him, in silence, for a moment, and then said, "My friends, you have heard that the prey have escaped us for the time—I know not how, and it matters but little."

"We have discovered how, we have discovered how," cried half-a-dozen voices. "We have traced the horses' feet from a cave hidden by the gorse and bushes there; but there are still men in the castle."

"It matters not," replied Caillet. "Those who made it worth taking are gone. You have heard that they have escaped, I say, but there is one thing that you have not heard, that they have escaped, only to fall again into our hands with greater certainty than ever. There were some of you that feared, there were some of you that doubted, when I told you, that our very first success would bring millions to aid and support us in breaking our chains, and crushing our

enemies. What I have told you has now proved true: all your best hopes are fulfilled. The people of Paris—I mean the oppressed people of Paris—not only offer to join you, but call you to take part with them in a great enterprise; and the commune of another important city, with the mayor and magistrates at its head, offer to receive you as brothers, to give up the place to you, and to enable you, at one blow, to crush the whole brood of serpents that have poisoned France. This is more than I ever dreamed or hoped for. My friends, my dear fellow-countrymen, John Soulard, mayor of Meaux, offers to receive us, and our Parisian brethren, under Vaillant and Giles, into that great and important city. You will ask, perhaps, what is the advantage of that? There are some, indeed, who may think it will be enough to plunder the rich houses of the nobles therein; to sack the king's palace; to break into the many convents and abbeys it contains. But I tell you, all this is nothing, in comparison with that which our entrance into Meaux will afford us. Listen and mark me. Shut up in the market-place

of that town, and the buildings that surround it, are the Duchess of Normandy, the young wife of the regent, Isabel of France, the regent's sister, a young and lovely woman, with two hundred others of all the highest ladies of the land of France. They have none to defend or help them: they are in our power; they are at our mercy. Wealth, too, and jewels in abundance, are there, and those who have fled from this castle have madly directed their course thither. Here are the letters of the mayor inviting us; here are the letters of Vaillant and his friends beseeching us to join them. It is for you, you, my friends, to say what shall be done. Speak! shall we continue the siege of this castle of Beaumont, or shall I instantly lead you to Meaux?"

"To Meaux, to Meaux!" shouted a thousand voices. "Lead us to Meaux, brave Caillet!"

"We will have princesses for our wives and concubines," said one.

"We will not keep them long," answered another.

"The dagger can soon cut such marriage

vows," cried Caillet with the sneer upon his lip.
" Is it to Meaux then?"

" To Meaux, to Meaux!" again exclaimed the multitude.

" Well, then," continued Caillet, " let us not pause a moment. Bring me a horse, and I am ready as I stand. Let a few remain here to blockade this place, that the men therein issue not forth to cut off the stragglers. Let others follow after, who are encumbered with their baggage or their wealth; but all that are young, and active, and daring, follow me without delay."

Ere half an hour was over, a great part of the immense multitudes which had been gathered together under the walls of Beaumont was in movement towards Meaux. A new impetus was given to them, and they rushed on like famished tigers, either for blood or crime. It was night when they reached the town; and such was their impatient confidence, that on finding the gates shut it was with difficulty Caillet restrained them from attempting to storm the place. They spread themselves,

however, through the smaller houses scattered about in the fields, and on the banks of the river; and many a bright flame rising up from the country for miles round Meaux told of the scenes of devastation and violence that were taking place.

At the demand of the insurgent leader, the mayor himself came, early on the following morning, to one of the wickets to speak with him who had already made himself such a meteor-like reputation for wonderful as well as horrible deeds. Caillet asked him but few questions, and those in a tone of authority and power, that made the magistrate shrink, overawed before him. The first demand was, would the citizens throw open their gates to receive him, as had been promised, or should he open a passage through the walls, which would give him and his party speedy admission to the city.

The mayor replied in humble tone, That not only would the gates be very soon cast wide to admit him, but that he would quickly see with what joy the people were ready to welcome him.

Caillet's last question was, " Did any of the fugitives from Beaumont enter Meaux to-day ? " and on hearing a full account of the arrival of the duchess and her party, he muttered to himself, " Now, Adela de Mauvinet, now ! "

Till nine o'clock all the entrances of the town remained closed, and it was with difficulty that Caillet restrained the Jacques ; but at that hour the gates were thrown open, and the mayor himself appeared on horseback, to usher the leaders in. Shouts and acclamations rang through the air, and it required no slight exertion to maintain a degree of order and regularity, as the peasantry were led into the city through the various narrow streets, and were directed in masses towards the wide open space which fronted the bridge leading to the market-place.

There, new shouts burst upon the air, when the rude multitude found large tables spread for them in the midst of the streets, groaning with abundance, and the townsmen of Meaux in arms ready to provide every thing they might want at their repast.

In the same place appeared likewise some

fifteen hundred of the citizens of Paris under the two insurgent chiefs, Giles and Vaillant; and many were the smooth congratulations which the would-be polite Parisians poured forth upon Caillet, as he rode on by the side of the mayor. But the stern, dark leader of the peasants' revolt replied to them very briefly, yet in words which, even accustomed as their ears were to a higher sort of eloquence than the country people ever heard, struck and astonished them, and at once taught them, that they had come there to be led, and not to lead.

Caillet stood by, while the peasants devoured the food that had been prepared for them, glancing his eyes from the walls and towers of the market-place on the other side of the Marne to his rude followers, and muttering to himself, "I must allow them to sate one beast's appetite before I lead the wolves to gratify another.—This place is stronger than I thought," he said aloud, speaking to the Parisians and the mayor. "It will take us two days to reduce it, if there be many men therein."

"Two days!" cried the mayor—"more than

that, good sir; though there be not a score of men within the place."

Caillet gazed at him with a scornful smile. "Why," he replied, "it is the work of a carpenter to take it! — It needs no general. Have you no boats or ladders? This bridge, indeed, they can defend. But give me boats and ladders, and we will be in that market square within an hour. They must be made, I know. But that can well be done in two days, as I have said."

"And yet, my good friend," answered the mayor, speaking to him in a low voice, that the rest of those around might not hear, "did I not understand you rightly, that there is a lady in the place whom you would fain reserve to yourself from less scrupulous hands? The same is the case with me. If we assault the wall at many points, who can tell where the entrance will first be made. If we attack the gate alone ——"

"You are right," said Caillet: "we will attack the gate; but it shall not require more time either to take the place. What car-

penters have you here? Let them be brought: with planks, and heavy beams of wood, we will soon shatter that gate to atoms, and have a fair way in."

Carpenters were accordingly called forward: beams and planks were procured; and under the direction and continual superintendence of Caillet, one of the vast and powerful machines was commenced, which in those days supplied the place of cannon. The construction proceeded with great rapidity; and the insurgents, heavy with wine and meat, gathered round the spot where the carpenters were labouring, and viewed their progress with surprise and admiration. But their wonder was still more excited by Caillet's knowledge and skill, he alone, of all the persons present, being able to direct the workmen in what they had to do. The rude Jacques gazed and muttered, commenting upon every part of the work; and though they knew, generally, that the object of the machine was to drive down the walls or burst open the gates, much did they marvel at many of the things they saw, asking each other,

“ What is that for? What is that to do? ” and still they turned their eyes to Caillet, who stood stern and dark, giving no explanation to any one, but ordering with clear precision every thing that was to be done.

“ I believe he is something more than a man,” said one of the peasants.

“ I think he is the devil himself,” murmured another.

“ I have heard,” answered a third, “ that his sword cuts through an enemy without his ever moving an arm.”

“ Joachim Verger, who was there, when he killed Antoine the robber,” whispered another, “ told me, that his blade gave but one wave, and the fellow’s head rolled along the ground like a dropped pippin.”

“ He can read and write,” said the person who had first spoken, “ which is more than half the lords of the land can do; and where he got such knowledge, unless from the devil, I do not know.”

Such was the conversation amongst one of the many groups of Jacques who wandered

through the town of Meaux. It was a curious thing to see the different effects which their appearance in the city produced upon the citizens themselves, according to their various characters. There were some who had shut up and barred their houses, covered their windows over with planks, and blocked up the staircases that led to the higher stories. There were others, a great deal more frightened than these at the presence of the Jacques in Meaux, who nevertheless stood at their own doors, with faces full of forced and fearful smiles, shaking hands with the rude peasantry, or offering them wine and hydromel. There were priests and monks who led them into the church or the convent; and, while in their hearts they were giving them to eternal condemnation, called down with loud voices the blessings of God upon them, and prayed for success to their holy cause. In short, all the hypocrisy of fear was enacted with various grimaces in different parts of the town of Meaux.

But there were other places where the Jacques were in truth willingly received, and where

the poorer sort of artisans — those who were either driven to despair by unmerited poverty, or those who were reduced to it by vice, by debauchery, and bad conduct — hallooed on the fierce insurgents from the country, and excited them with the thought of the lewd horrors of the ensuing day, when they should have broken into the market-place of Meaux, and torn the victims it contained from their only place of refuge.

During this time, however, the machine which was to batter down the gate proceeded rapidly, and ere night fell was well nigh complete. The news spread through the people that at day-break the next morning the attack would commence; and each man prepared himself — sitting at the doors and in the streets, where tables were spread for them — with gluttony and drunkenness, for the brief strife and the brutal gratification of the following day.

In the mean while, however, Caillet, Soulas, Vaillant, and Giles, held counsel together, of a kind which, perhaps, might not altogether have pleased their followers, had they been

able to hear it. They parted before hand the principal captives amongst them: each claimed his choice of one, or perhaps two, of the fair unhappy beings who remained trembling within those walls. Soulas and Caillet were animated by individual passion, and each named the woman that was to fall to his share; but the other two were mad with crime and folly, and had well nigh quarrelled as to who should seize upon the young wife of the regent. Vaillant, however, contented himself at last with the Duchess of Orleans; and all that remained to be settled was the means of securing to themselves, in the midst of such a scene as was to ensue, the captives they had thus appropriated. Every one, however, had, or fancied he had, a certain number of devoted followers who would obey his will. Soulas had a guard at his disposal; Vaillant and Giles boasted how many they could command; but Caillet only said, “No one disobeys me twice!”

Ere he lay down to rest, he sent for Jacques Morne, and spoke with him long. The man

was but the slave of his will, and ended by saying, “ Oh ay, Caillet, oh ay, Caillet : there are plenty of people from about Beauvois that know her, and will help me willingly enough. I will answer for saving her, if you do not get hold of her first yourself— only I bargain to kill all the rest as I find them. I care not for women ; and, as you said yourself one day, we must crush the dams, if we would have no more young vipers bred to sting us.”

Caillet made no reply, except by the word “ Well ! ” and a nod of the head, which Jacques Morne rightly understood as an order to leave him.

As soon as he was alone, the leader of the revolt sat down in a large curiously-fashioned chair of ivory, which was placed near a table in the centre of the room ; and after leaning his head upon his hand for several minutes, and muttering to himself “ How it aches ! ” he turned and gazed around him upon the splendid furniture of the apartment in which the mayor had lodged him. It was in the king’s palace at Meaux, and in the very bed-room which the

regent had occupied, that John Soulard had placed the chief of the insurgent peasants. Rich arras hung around ; the arms of France were emblazoned over each of the two doors ; and a royal crown surmounting the curtains of crimson velvet and gold, which surrounded the bed, instantly showed Caillet that he was in the state chamber of the monarch himself.

“ How it aches ! ” he said again, pressing his hand upon his brow. “ I wonder if the other heads which have lain upon that gorgeous pillow have throbbed as mine does now : perhaps they have ; for to the weak, luxurious triflers, from amongst whom our kings are chosen, the weight of a crown is a heavy burden ; and that which would soon bring ease to my aching temples may well sicken them. A crown ! It is a strange and mysterious garland that—not without its thorns, perhaps, but still with flowers of the brightest hue and finest odour. First, in the wreath is power ! — To command and to be obeyed ! or simply to know that, at our will, millions are ready to act whatever part we please ; to feel that our word, like lightning, can

carry death from one side of the world to the other ! Then comes the utter independence of our will, which no man under a monarch can be said to have—the despotic sway over ourselves, our actions, thoughts, and seemings ! None of the hard task-masters affect the monarch that goad all inferior men through life—the care, the caution, the prudence, the hypocrisy, that are necessary for every one in his dealings with the world, let his mind be as high as it will, let his objects be as mighty and as wise as any that the earth can show !—No one but a king can have this immunity !—Why, here I am, myself, as much a slave as ever, forced to bend my looks, and shape my words, and suit my actions to the will, and to the whim, and to the prejudices of the thousands that follow me. Not even a glance of my eye is wholly free. Have I not eternally to think of how it may suit the masters that I seem to command ?—No, no, freedom is only to be found in power ; and oh ! what a grand thing it must be to feel one's self able not only to scorn and hate, but to make contempt and detestation felt ! Then comes enjoyment—un-

limited gratification, with no bounds but the capabilities of the body and the mind. Varied, everlasting, with the whole world for a garden, and every delight that it produces for the fruit ! How immense might be one's range, how marvellous the sudden contrast of pleasure ; to change from fiery passion to calm tranquillity, from the burning flame of desire to the soft lulling draught of sweet music ; to vary the corporeal pleasures of the table and the wine cup, the dance and the chase, with the government of nations, the mazes of policy, the extension of territory, the battle and the victory ! — Then comes — But who is there ?" he continued, turning sharply round as he heard the door open behind him. " What would you have with me, Vaillant, and what makes you look pale ?"

The man to whom he spoke — one of the chief leaders, as the reader already knows, of the revolted citizens of Paris who had joined with the Jacques in the attack of Meaux — advanced to the table with a quick step, and an air from which he made an effort to banish all anxiety.

He could not effect that purpose so successfully, however, as to prevent the eyes of Caillet from perceiving that there was emotion within, and the latter repeated, “ What makes you look so pale?—Pray be seated, sir.”

“ Am I pale?” said Vaillant, drawing forward a stool. “ It is fatigue. I came to seek you, honourable sir, to have some consultation with you without the presence of these citizens of Meaux. They are a faithless race, now joining with us, now perhaps turning against us. I know not what hold you have over them ——”

“ Power !” rejoined Caillet. “ Go on !”

“ But we citizens,” continued Vaillant, “ only rely upon them inasmuch as we have thousands behind us in Paris to support us. If any thing were to go wrong in the capital, it is not impossible that these men would seize and deliver us to the dauphin.”

“ Hark ye, Vaillant,” replied Caillet: “ your friends in Paris have received a heavy blow! — There is no use of hypocrisy with me.”

“ Ha !” cried Vaillant: “ have you then heard the news ?”

“ I have not heard,” answered Caillet, “ but I have read it.”

“ Read it?” exclaimed the Parisian.

“ Ay, in your face,” said Caillet : “ what are the tidings, Vaillant ? speak them plainly and at once. Your situation and mine in regard of these men of Meaux is much the same. They cannot betray you without betraying me also, they cannot frustrate your objects without disappointing mine. As our security depends upon each other, our thoughts must be in common. What is your news ? Is the dauphin in Paris ?”

“ No, no, not yet,” exclaimed Vaillant ; “ but the great prévôt is dead ! Stephen Marcel has been horribly murdered !”

Caillet mused without reply, though to the surprise of his companion a slight smile fluttered on his lip. It was not that he was amused to hear a man, whose business at that very hour was murder, talk with a seeming abhorrence of a similar crime ; Caillet knew the human heart too well to wonder at that. But it was, that he was not displeased at the fact of the prévôt’s death ; and although he would hardly own his satisfaction

to himself, the signs of it made themselves visible in his countenance. He had regarded Marcel with a certain degree of jealousy; he had seen him take the lead of the insurgents in the capital, as he himself had done in the country, and he had looked forward to the time when, the nobles having been destroyed and trampled under foot, and the royal authority having been utterly overthrown, he himself and the *prévôt*, holding from their several factions the only power remaining in the state, would stand up, two mighty rivals, one against the other, and end the great contest which had begun, by a last struggle between themselves.

Though pleased, however, he was not wholly satisfied. With the peculiar boldness of his character he had calculated upon making even Marcel himself an instrument for effecting his purposes, till such time, at least, as the strife necessarily began between them; and there was therefore before his eyes some derangement of his more remote schemes in consequence of the death of that celebrated demagogue.

Caillet's first words were, "We must find another."

They were addressed, indeed, more to himself than to his companion; but Vaillant instantly exclaimed, "Another! where shall we find such another? Who shall supply the place of Stephen Marcel?"

"Why not, Pierre Vaillant?" demanded Caillet, turning upon him his flashing eyes: "such things are not impossible. But how did this man die?"

"All I know is but a report by word of mouth," replied Vaillant; "I hear, however, that he had covenanted last night to give admission to the King of Navarre —"

"Ha!" cried Caillet, his brow becoming as black as night.

"And he had gone," continued the Parisian, "to the gate of St. Anthony to open it for the Navarrese troops, when two of those tyrannical royalists, John of Charny and Pepin des Essarts, fell upon him with their battle-axes on the steps of the Bastille. Marcel fought like a lion, they say, and so did those who were with him, but

more came up to join the murderers, and they dashed his brains out upon the stones."

"Served the traitor right!" replied Caillet: "what had he to do with kings? Had he been true to the commons, he would not have died."

"But I hear —" said Vaillant in a low tone, "but I hear that it was their intention to put all our enemies to death that night, and the houses were marked for the purpose. No man was to be left living but such as are known friends to the people. All the rest were to be slain without mercy."

"There he was right," replied Caillet; "and if such were really his purposes, he was more honest than wise; for to deal with king, or prince, or noble, otherwise than with a dagger or a spear, is a folly for any man who seeks to overthrow our tyrants. As for the rest, fear not this good mayor of Meaux: he is in my hands, my friend; and were he but to dream of treason he should see this town one mass of flames before an hour was over. I have not cast down thirty fortified places, I have not trodden on the neck of thirty lordly barons, supported by

their veteran bands, to fear a petty thing like Soulas, Mayor of Meaux. But I will tell you what we have to dread: it is that the dauphin, freed from his apprehensions of Marcel, may turn his forces against us here at once, before we have captured yon market-place. Attacked in Meaux, we should fight to a disadvantage; and, therefore, my good sir, we must resolve to force those walls and gates before noon to-morrow. We must not pause for sleep. Come with me! That engine shall be finished before I lay my head upon a pillow; at least so far, that the rudest workman may complete it in my absence."

Thus saying, he raised the lamp from the table, and followed by Vaillant proceeded to the spot where the huge mangonel, which he had laboured to construct all day, lay still incomplete. The carpenters were again summoned to their task; and though they proceeded more slowly than he desired or expected, Caillet remained till he saw the engine ready, and nothing left to be done on the following morning but to bring up to the open space before the bridge the large masses of stone with which the mangonel was to be charged.

CHAP. XI.

IT was night; and Albert Denyn and the stout soldier Scroope sat by the fire-side of the good Curé Dacy; while his niece — her eyes sparkling with pleasure to render any service to him who had so greatly contributed to her deliverance — poured out from one of those large leathern bottles then in use some choice wine, which her uncle had brought forth to refresh the weary travellers after their long and hard day's ride.

At every village through which they had passed, Albert Denyn had inquired for the troop of the Capital de Buch; and as such a celebrated leader was not likely to cross the country unnoticed, he concluded, from all he heard, that his noble friend had not yet arrived. The fear that he might not appear in time, and thus disappoint one of his chief hopes for the de-

liverance of those he loved, saddened the young soldier, and threw him into deep fits of thought; and imagination tormented him with apprehensions for Adela and her father.

“Poor as I am,” cried Albert, at length, “I would give a purse of gold to have tidings to-morrow morning either from Beaumont or from Meaux.”

“Rest, rest, my son,” replied the curé, “and trust in God: He brings deliverance when we least expect it. Finish thy supper, and then to bed: thy horses shall be well cared for; and if you must needs part at day-break to-morrow, they will not go unfed.—Drink another cup of wine, worthy trooper,” he continued, speaking to Scroope. “It was for such occasions as these that wine was given to man.”

“By my faith, good father,” answered Scroope, “I think it is for every occasion. I do not know the time or the circumstances in which wine does not do my heart good: it’s the best of all liquors, bating beer. Good barley beer, that some folks call ale, is worth all the other liquors in the world put together.”

Ere long, Albert Denyn and the trooper retired to rest; but there were people on foot in the curé's house all night; and he himself returned upon his mule, as from a long ride, at the hour of three in the morning.

"I have been able to get no intelligence, my child," he said to his niece, who was waiting in the passage to receive him. "There is a rumour of a bad man, named Peter Giles, having marched from Paris, with some men-at-arms, towards the town of Meaux; but whether to attack or defend it, no one could tell. Has the man returned from Beaumont? — but that is impossible; he has not had time."

Shortly after, the step of Albert Denyn was heard upon the stairs, and he and Scroope prepared instantly to set out.

"Whither do you turn your steps first, my sons?" asked the curé.

"To Provins, my good father," replied Albert Denyn: "there we part, and one of us goes to Montereau, while the other speeds away towards the frontier."

The old man made no answer, but gave them his benediction, and let them depart.

The two horsemen rode on till the middle of the day ; but they were then obliged to halt, in order to refresh their horses. As soon as the beasts had taken some food, they were brought out again ; and Albert Denyn had his foot in the stirrup, when the sound of a trumpet was heard, and shortly after, over a gentle slope in the road, at about the distance of a quarter of a mile, some fluttering pennons, and two broad banners, were seen rising in the air.

“ The capital, as I live !” exclaimed Albert Denyn ; “ but whose can be that other banner ? Or, a pale gules !”

“ That ?” answered Scroope ; “ why you should know it better than I do — it is the device of the Count of Foix. I saw it often in Perigueux. It gave us some trouble at times.”

Albert Denyn spurred on, and in a minute or two more, sprang to the ground by the side of the capital’s horse. The eagerness of his countenance, and the few first words that he spoke, made the great leader instantly halt his

little troop, while the principal persons present gathered round him.

“ What news from Paris? What news of this Jacquerie we hear of? What news of the King of Navarre?”

“ Bad from all quarters, I fear,” replied Albert Denyn. “ The King of Navarre and the dauphin are at open war; the Parisians are in revolt; the Jacques are slaughtering the nobles throughout the land. But, my lord captal,” he continued, “ I came hither, seeking you at full speed. I have an adventure for you, fair sir, which you will not fail to undertake. My good Lord of Mauvinet, with but a handful of men, is shut up in the castle of Beaumont — some thirty leagues hence — by the Jacques of Brie.”

“ How many are there against him?” demanded the captal.

“ I cannot justly say,” answered Albert Denyn: “ were they regular troops one might judge, but they are merely a wild multitude — certainly more than twenty thousand men.”

“ And we have five-and-thirty, noble count,” replied the captal, turning towards the Count

de Foix.—“Well, Albert, now tell me two things. How long can the good lord hold out? and is the Lady Adela with him?”

“The count can keep the castle, I should judge, two or three days,” replied the young soldier—“a week at the utmost. But we can raise men, my lord. I am sure that from some of the neighbouring castles we can gain assistance. As for the Lady Adela,” and the colour came up into his cheek, while the keen eye of the captal rested firmly upon him, “she is in Meaux, in not much greater safety than her father. The Duchess of Orleans and herself resolved to make their escape from Beaumont, and I, with some others, were sent to guard them to Meaux, where it was supposed the regent might be found. None of the royal family was there, however, when we arrived, but the Duchess of Normandy; and with her some sixty or seventy of the highest ladies in France, I was told, but scarcely enough men-at-arms to play sentinel on the battlements of the market-place. The citizens are disaffected, it seems; the ladies are terrified at their situa-

tion ; and I came away with the purpose of either going to Montereau, or sending this good fellow, to the dauphin, for the purpose of calling him back to Meaux, with what troops he may have at his command."

" Better go youself, Albert," said the captal: " you may gain a high reward, while we raise men, and ride on to Beaumont."

" No, my lord," replied Albert, " by your good leave, I will go with you to Beaumont: Scroope, here, can carry the message to the dauphin, and win the guerdon."

" Well, then, forward, my good friend," said the captal, addressing Scroope: " do you know the message and the road ?"

" Both, both sir," answered Scroope, passing on, " and I will not miss the reward for want of the spur."

" Come, Albert, with us then," continued the captal, " and tell us more of those sad events as we go. Will France never be at peace ?"

" God forbid that there should be peace for any length of time !" cried the Count de Foix. " War is the occupation of a gentleman ; and

what should we do, captal, if all the world were to agree to remain slobbering in furred gowns? But as for these Jacques, I have no notion of the villains taking the trade out of our hands. Plunder is a part of our especial privileges, captal; and we must not let mere peasants share with us."

He spoke laughingly, and with a certain degree of sarcastic bitterness; for there was not wanting even in those days, amongst the nobles themselves, a perception of the vices of their social state; although they would have sooner given up life itself than that curious mixture of fierce and gentle, cruel and generous, pursuits, which formed the chivalrous occupation of the day.

The captal, without pausing, rode on for about ten miles past the little inn where Albert had stopped to refresh his horses, and at length drew in the rein at a small place called Touquin, intending to pass the night there: it was but a hamlet, but at that time a populous one. The castles of several nobles were seen rising round; the Jacquerie had not, as yet, infected the pea-

santry; and besides finding ample accommodation for their men in the cottages around, the capitai and the Count de Foix trusted to obtain there, such an accession of strength from the castles of Coulommiers, Villeneuve, Rosoy, and from the height near Jouy, which was then crowned by one of the finest châteaus in the country, as to enable them to attempt the relief of Beaumont with some certainty of success.

The evening meal was soon spread; the capitai and the count took their places at the head of the table; their followers ranged themselves on either side, keeping due distinction of rank; and with the light-hearted spirit of the day, they laughed, and joked, and drank as if there were no such things as bloodshed, and murder, and civil contentions in all the world.

“ Why, Albert, where got you that string of pearls?” demanded the capitai at length. “ The gold chain, I know was the emperor’s gift, but that must have been from the hand of some fair lady, surely.”

“ It was given me, beau sire, by the Duchess of Orleans,” replied Albert Denyn, “ as a reward

for guarding her from Paris to Beaumont; and she, moreover, promised me, if I carried it through the midst of the Jacques, to ask knighthood for me from the hand of the dauphin himself."

"There was never any thing like his luck," said Bassot de Mauleon, one of the gentlemen attached to the Capital de Buch: "he seems to fall in with every good thing that is going!"

"Because he is always in the saddle to seek them, Bassot," replied the capital. "Why, you might have won the gold chain, the emperor gave him, for you set out together; only you staid to make love to a pretty girl in a village on the Danube, and lost the reward."

"But I won the girl," cried Mauleon, "and that was better of the two. Yet it must be owned, he is a lucky man."

"He will be more lucky still, before he has done," said the capital.

"Fortune is conduct," observed the Count de Foix; "but I suppose, young gentleman, you look upon yourself in a state to claim the duchess's promise; for if I understood you rightly, you guarded her safely to Meaux from

Beaumont, when the castle was besieged by the Jacques."

"No, no, my lord," replied Albert Denyn, "such was not her meaning, and I would never dare claim knighthood upon such a ground. If I carry the trinket through the villains, sword in hand, in the open day, it may be considered as something, but our escape from Beaumont was made by secret ways, and in the darkness of the night."

"Well," said the captal, "we must not linger long over our food, for, with my good will, tomorrow evening shall find us under the walls of Beaumont. We will send messengers immediately to the lords of Jouy, Villeneuve, and Rosoy; and with the first gleam of light, if they send us any reinforcements, we will be upon our way to deliver my good Lord of Mauvinet.— Mauleon, you shall go to Jouy, and beseech the châtelain to give us his company on this —'

"Noble gentlemen," said the aubergiste entering, "here is a priest without, asking to speak with one of you, named Denyn, and if he be not here, with the noble Captal de Buch."

“ Why, Albert,” cried the capitaine, “ what do you do with a priest? Are you going to make confession before you are hanged?”

“ Your pardon, noble sirs,” urged the aubergiste, “ but the good priest is very earnest for instant admission. He says the matter is of life and death.”

“ Send him in, send him in then,” exclaimed the capitaine; and at the same moment Albert Denyn started up, and advanced towards the door. Before he reached it, however, the good priest, Dacy, entered the room, with a face very pale, and a dress soiled with dust and hard riding.

“ My son,” he said, grasping the young soldier’s hand, “ you were eager for tidings from Beaumont and from Meaux; I bring you both. Beaumont is well nigh free; the Jacques have decamped from it, leaving only enough to keep the garrison in. But alas for Meaux! the mayor and the people have thrown open the gates to the villeins; the rabble of Paris have joined them; they are even now attacking the market-place, where are collected

all the noblest ladies in France, almost without defence."

Albert struck his hand against his forehead, forgetting all restraint in the agony of the moment.

"She will be lost! She will be lost!" he exclaimed. "My beautiful, my beloved! and I not there to die for her!"

The powerful hand of the capital was laid upon his shoulder. "Fear not, dear boy," he said; and then turning to the rest, added in a loud voice, "Give my banner to the wind! Every foot into the stirrup! Greilly to the rescue! and shame upon him who will not follow to deliver the ladies of France!"

Albert turned and grasped his hand; but the capital stopped him—"Not a word, not a word!" he cried. "We go to great deeds, Albert, which will make our names immortal whether we live or die. — By Heaven, my cousin of Foix, I would rather have this opportunity of marching, with five-and-thirty men, to deliver the ladies of France from an army of villeins, than wear the crown of any realm in Christendom.

What say you, my men? is not this glorious fortune?"

A shout was the reply; and ere half an hour was over, the gallant little band was on its way to Meaux.

CHAP. XII.

THE waiting for deliverance ! — It is a terrible thing, wherever we put our trust or hope, if that hope be of earth. Ay, it is a terrible thing, even when our hope is from heaven ; for, unto all of us, from one end of the world to the other, might be addressed the often-repeated reproach of the Redeemer, that we are of but little faith. However strong may be our conviction of God's mercy and tenderness, of his unwillingness to punish, of his readiness to forgive, of the omniscience of his wisdom, and the omnipotence of his power, the weak spirit of man will still tremble, and doubt, and fear ; will shrink from each painful trial, whatever be the object, and think the deliverance long and tardy, even while he continues to hope that it will come. But how often is it with us that hope itself goes out ; that looking round, and

calculating all the chances and probabilities of human aid, we see none on any side; that all assistance from any being on the earth seems impossible, and blasphemous fear even whispers a doubt, that God himself can help us?

The situation of those within the market-place of Meaux might well produce in their minds the utmost pitch of despair; when, on the night after Albert Denyn had left them, they heard the shouts of the wild and furious multitude that poured down to the banks of the Marne, and when they saw rising up through the country round the flames of houses, and cottages, and hamlets mingling with the blaze of watch-fires and the glare of torches. It was by these terrible signs they first learned that the Jacques were under the walls of Meaux.

Little sleep had any one that night, though many there present needed it greatly; and by those on the battlements could be heard, till a late hour, the shrieks and cries, as well as the sounds of revelry and rude merriment, which rose up from the fields round the city. In the mean while, within the walls of the market-

place, circulated the report that the mayor, whose faith had been long doubtful, had promised admission to the enemy; and the communication which they held with those in the town, little as it was, soon confirmed the tidings. Many were the anxious consultations; many the fruitless inquiries, as to when the message could reach the dauphin, and as to how long the place could be held out; many the bitter murmurings and keen reproaches with which they loaded the name of Soulard the treacherous mayor of Meaux and the faithless citizens, to whose courage and truth the ladies of France had been committed. Often, too, during the night, some timid girl, who at any other time would have feared to have set her foot at that hour beyond the precincts of her paternal dwelling, stole up to the unguarded battlements to listen for the sounds that she dreaded to hear, and scan the darkness with an eager eye, lest the ruffians by whom she was surrounded should take advantage of the obscurity to steal upon them unperceived.

But of all within those walls, there was none

so sad, there was none so apprehensive, as poor Adela de Mauvinet ; for she had not alone to ask herself what might be her own fate the next moment, but she had bitterly to inquire, without the power of obtaining any certain answer, what might be the condition of her beloved father at that very time. Would the multitude of Jacquerie have quitted Beaumont, she asked herself, without having taken the castle ? and as her heart replied to the question but too sadly, tears as for the dead rolled over her fair cheeks.

There were but two other beings to whom she was attached on earth, her young brother and Albert Denyn. That the former was safe, she thanked God ; but as she did so, she added, in her own mind, “ I shall never behold him more.” It must be owned, however, that it was to the companion of her childhood, the friend of her youth, her deliverer from danger and from worse than death, her lover, her best beloved, that her thoughts turned most eagerly. What would be his feelings, she asked, when he returned to Meaux, and found the place of their refuge in the power of

the unsparing, sanguinary, barbarous multitude; what would be his anguish, when he learned that she had fallen into the brutal hands of him from whom he had once saved her, and when he could not know to what horrors she might be subjected before death delivered her.

She thought of him, and she grieved for his agony; but Adela judged, and judged rightly, that Albert would not long survive her, and something like hope and joy sprung up again in her mind, as she said to herself, “It was impossible we ever could be united on earth; but now, though our bridal be a bloody one, we shall soon be united in heaven.”

From time to time the contemplation of her own fate, too, pressed heavily upon her. “What would she herself do? she asked. How should she herself act? Was she bound by any religious tie to suffer dishonour, rather than to seek death?” and she tried to call up again to memory all that she knew of the word of Truth, in order to gain some rule for her conduct, and to justify, if possible, to her own mind, the last terrible act of maiden purity.

The legends of her church supplied her with manifold examples of such conduct ; but still she shrunk from the idea of suicide. “ Would they but kill me ! ” she thought, “ would they but kill me ! — Yet surely woman, though she be weak, has a right to defend herself to the last. There are not men enough to guard the walls, or to protect us and themselves, if the villeins break in. Why should we not take what arms we can get ? Why should we not aid to defend ourselves ? Why should we not, as a last resource, drive them to slay us, by resistance even unto death ? Then the whole sin and crime would be theirs ; we shall die unpolluted ; and the weight of the murder will rest heavy upon them.”

To a night of agitation and fear succeeded a day of terror and dismay. The young Duchess of Normandy and her companions gathered themselves together in the midst of the market-place, not to consult as much as to lament ; and the dark and anxious countenances of the few men that were with them — countenances in which there was no hope —

served but to dispirit them the more. Each told the other how she had spent the hours, the sad thoughts, the fearful visions, the dark imaginations that had possessed them.

There was not a word of courage or energy amongst them, till Adela related what had been passing in her mind ; and it was strange to hear that sweet and gentle voice proposing high deeds to women like herself, in defence of their honour and their purity ; and to see the fair and beautiful beings around her roused into ardour and eagerness by her example, and with renewed courage seeking for those arms which their hands were but little accustomed to wield.

“ We can but die,” they exclaimed, “ we can but die ; and it is better to die by any other hands than our own.”

A faint, sad smile came over the countenance of the young Lord of Chamblé, as he heard their determination.

“ I never thought to fall,” he said, “ with such fair companions in arms ; but I fear we can make no great resistance, and my fate will be soon decided. If, therefore, you are deter-

mined upon your conduct — and I cannot but applaud the purpose — take the lightest weapons that you can get. I saw some cross-bows, with which the pages learn to aim their quarrels ; these, with daggers, and short swords, and knives, very weak hands can use ; and as what you seek is, alas ! but death in the end, you may well draw it down upon your heads from the enemy, if you employ such arms with determination.”

While he was yet speaking, a messenger came to call him to the gate tower ; and after a few minutes' absence, he returned, saying, “ I know not what these treacherous communies are doing. They are laying out tables in the streets, as if for some great festival.”

The matter was speedily explained, however. The sight of the Jacques pouring in soon brought all the men-at-arms to the walls. The pages joined them to make the greater show ; and to the honour of those within the market-place of Meaux, let it be remembered, that not the lowest person there present, not the serving man, who never raised his ambition higher

than perhaps to groom the horse of the knight, where he before groomed the horse of the squire, who did not now swear to die willingly for the ladies of France, and to spend the last drop of his blood to protect them.

Anxiously the women remained behind, with sinking hearts and trembling limbs, but still resolved and prepared. The suspense, however, proved too much for endurance; and at the end of an hour, one of the boldest ventured up to the top of the wall, to ascertain what was taking place.

“They seem to be constructing a machine for battering down the gates,” said the Lord of Chamblé, in reply to her questions. “If so, it must be to-morrow, or the next day, before they begin the attack.”

“Thank God, thank God!” cried the lady; “then we may yet be saved.”

“Montereau is far off,” answered the Lord of Chamblé, sadly. “The messenger knew not that the danger was so pressing; the dauphin, I find, had but three hundred men with him; and there are many thousands within sight of

this gate. Not only the villain peasants, but men-at-arms, I see, with banners — probably the commons of Paris. Take not hold of a foolish hope, lady : I feel upon my heart that weight which tells me we are to die here, and soon."

During the rest of the day, after this brief conversation, pages were sent down from time to time, to tell the princesses and their companions what was taking place in the town, as far as those on the gate tower could discover; but the delay of the attack was an aggravation rather than a relief. It wore out and exhausted the energies of the hearts within those walls; it made the interval like the agony of a prolonged death ; and by the time that night came, there was more than one of the ladies there present who proposed not to wait for the attack, but to destroy themselves together, and at once. Some, however, clung to the last hope of life, and their voices prevailed to stay the rash act.

Towards sunset, the young Lord of Chamblé came down for a few moments to take some

refreshment; and when the Duchess of Normandy asked him at what time he thought the attack would commence, he replied, “Early to-morrow morning, lady, if not during the darkness. The engine they are making has been constructed with incredible rapidity; and a few hours more of daylight will enable them to complete it, even if they do not go on by torchlight. We must remain upon the walls all night, and show lights here and there, to deceive them: they evidently think that we are ten times more numerous than we are, otherwise they would have sealed the walls at twenty points long ere this.”

“Had we not better, then, spread round the battlements ourselves,” said the duchess of Normandy, “and keep up fires, and carry torches, during the night? they cannot see whether we are men or women; and if we can but intimidate them for a time, my husband may come up.”

“You can do so, if you please,” replied the young knight, sadly; “but some of you had better sleep, while some keep the walls. Then,

as to to-morrow, if you still hold your resolution, and think there is no chance of these men sparing you, when I go up to the tower I will order the small gate in the palisade behind to be fastened up. There is no need for us to leave ourselves a retreat ; and you will have then some defence, which will oblige them to—”

“ Butcher us without dishonouring us, you would say, my lord,” added the Duchess of Orleans, as the young knight left the sentence unfinished.—“ Well, dear niece, you and I will be captain of the two bands, who watch the walls, and rest by turns. As I am brave, I will have some coward for my lieutenant ; and as you are cowardly, you shall have our sweet Adela for yours, for she comes of a brave race.”

There is nothing so sad as when mirth mingles with misery ; and the tears rose in the young duchess’s eyes, as she heard her fair relation’s words. The night, however, passed as had been appointed ; and throughout those hours of darkness bands of noble ladies and fair girls patrolled the beleaguered walls, armed with

such light weapons as they could wield, and trembling as they went.

The Duchess of Normandy had returned to the house she inhabited about an hour, when daylight began to dawn; and looking up, she said to Adela de Mauvinet, who was lying at her feet, “I wish, dear girl, you would go to the walls, and look out on the road that leads towards Fontenoy. Perhaps the dauphin may be coming.—God of heaven! this is very terrible, not to know that one has half an hour to live.—Take some one with you, and go, Adela.”

“I fear not! I will go alone, madam,” replied the young Lady of Mauvinet. “Look how yon poor thing is sleeping, quite worn out: it were barbarous to wake her. I will go alone.”

As she went, however, she found a young waiting-woman of the Duchess sitting weeping on the stairs, who, when she heard whither she was going, said, “Let me go with you, lady, as far as the stairs up to the wall. I dare not show my head above in the daylight, for fear they should shoot me with an arrow.”

“Come as far as thou wilt, and no farther,”

replied Adela. "Would to God they would shoot me with an arrow! It would find no hope in my heart to quell."

They soon reached the foot of the wall, and mounted the steps, the poor girl following, till she was within a few feet of the top. There however, the young lady left her, and going on, soon obtained a view over the fields around. The side to which she had been told to direct her attention was that which, looking over the meadow we have before mentioned, turned towards the south, where the bend of the river Marne, with the canal which insulated the market-place, could be clearly discerned, as well as a little sloping field beyond, and then some undulating country, stretching away towards Couilly.

Adela gazed out with even more than the eager anxiety of the sister in the fairy tale, but nothing did she see except the fair face of nature. She turned her eyes towards the town, but the great mass of the market-place lay between her and the bridge, and she could behold nothing in that direction either.

“If we had but a boat,” she thought, “we might ferry over into those fields, and perhaps escape;” but then she remarked, some way up, by the side of the canal, at a spot which must have been visible from many parts of the town, some two or three hundred of the Jacques lolling idly about, as if upon the watch, and she added to herself, “They would catch us ere we could fly.”

At that moment a sort of rushing sound, and then a dull, heavy noise, as if a violent blow were struck upon some large hollow surface, met her ear, and made her clasp her hands with terror.

“Run, run,” she exclaimed to the girl who was upon the steps — “Run and ask what that sound is, and come back and let me know.”

The girl was away, and returned in a minute, with a face still paler than before, and her teeth chattering in her head with fear.

“The attack has begun!” she said — “the attack has begun! That was a stone as big as one of these in the wall cast against the gates by the mangonel they have made.”

“ Now were the time to die,” said Adela to herself, looking at a dagger which Albert Denyn had given her — “ Now were the time to die.”

“ Oh, look out, look out !” exclaimed the girl, wringing her hands. “ Is there no hope ? Is there no help ?”

Adela turned her faint eyes over the prospect, towards Fontenoy, and was silent. The next instant she uttered a loud shriek, but it was a shriek of joy.

“ Yes, yes !” she cried — “ it is — it must be a banner, that is rising over the hill ! Yes, there it is, full ! A banner ! a banner ! The Capital de Buch ! The Capital de Buch ! Another, too, or, a pale gules ! — The Count of Foix ! Spears, spears coming up over the hill ! Run, tell the princess, girl ! Tell the poor Lady of St. Leu too ! — Call it up to them upon the gate tower ! Bid them fight for their honour ! Say help is at hand ! — Run, girl, run ! — Who is this first, that comes spurring on like fire ? Albert, as I live ! my own dear Albert ! bearing the captal’s banner too !”

“ Where are they, where are they ? ” cried the voice of the Duchess of Normandy, rushing with her hair all dishevelled, to the battlements, followed by a number of others. “ Where are our deliverers ? Alas ! they are very few.—They must be but the advance— Still, still they will enable us to keep the place till the dauphin comes.— But how are they to pass ? There is no bridge — there is no boat.— How will they pass ?—oh ! how will they pass ? ”

Adela made no reply. Her eyes, her heart, her soul, were fixed upon the banner of the Captal de Buch and him who bore it. Right onward he rode, like lightning down the slope, towards the spot where the canal was cut from the Marne, and where the current, being somewhat diverted, was consequently not so strong. No pause, no hesitation, was seen ; but waving the banner over his head as he approached the stream, he struck the rowels of his spurs deep into his horse’s sides, and plunged down the bank into the water. Loaded with heavy armour, horse and man for a moment well nigh disappeared in the tide ; but the banner still

waved in the air, and the next instant charger and rider rose up and came rapidly towards the meadow. The distance was but small ; and ere the rest of the horsemen reached the bank, the fore-feet of Albert Denyn's steed were striking the firm ground on the other side. No one hesitated to follow up his example. The capitai and the Count of Foix plunged in the first ; then came the banner-bearer of the count, and then, man by man, the gentlemen of their train.

“ Throw open the postern on the meadow ! ” cried the duchess. “ Run and tell our dear Lady of Orleans. — Come, let us greet our deliverers.”

“ Look, look ! ” exclaimed Adela — “ yon poor fellow is off his horse. — Help him, good God ! he will be drowned ! No, no — the gallant capitai has got him by the hand. He is safe ! he is safe ! ”

With gladly beating hearts, and brains well nigh bewildered by renewed hope, that bevy of fair girls ran down the steps to meet the noble gentlemen and their train, who came to fight in their defence. They found the postern gate

open, and the Duchess of Orleans and a number of other ladies already there. The capitai had sprung from his horse, and was leading him by the rein, speaking as he came to Albert Denyn, who had also dismounted, as was likewise the case with the Count of Foix and several others.

“By my honour, Albert,” said the capitai, “these brave fellows may well accuse me of having a favourite now. In letting you lead through that river, I have done for you what I would not do for any other man on earth; and yet you are so ungrateful, that you are going to take from me what I once coveted more than a monarch’s crown.”

There was gaiety and sadness mixed in the leader’s tone; but the voice of Albert Denyn was all sad, as he answered, “My lord, my lord, do not make me remember too bitterly that I was once a serf.”

“Well, well,” replied the capitai, “I will soon give you an opportunity of doing great deeds, my friends.—Martin, see that the horses be fed instantly, and if any fresh ones can be had in the place bring them all forth.—Cousin of Foix,

is not this our fair princess of Normandy?—Lady, by your leave, I kiss your sweet hand, and upon this fair book I swear, that, although I have but too often drawn my harsh sword against your husband and his friends, it shall to-day achieve your deliverance, or John de Greilly shall sleep this night in death.—Lady of Orleans, I know you well. Lo! Here stands a good knight of Foix for your defence.—Sweet Adela de Mauvinet, I bring you good tidings—your father is quite safe. But whom shall I give you for your champion? My young hero, here, good Albert Denyn, who certainly has borne my banner this day through fields I never thought to see it cross!—Ladies dear, for the rest of you, on my life, you are so many and we so few, you must e'en share the rest of us amongst you; but, nevertheless, I will trust that one good man-at-arms will show himself able this day to defend four ladies against at least a hundred Jacques."

"Alas! my lord," said the Duchess of Normandy, "speak not of it so lightly: you are very, very few, and you know not the numbers

that are opposed to you. We hoped that you but led the advanced party of a larger force. There are very many thousands in the town of Meaux and the neighbouring fields. They are even now attacking the gate. Hark ! the engine has dashed another stone against it."

"Fear not, lady, fear not," answered the captal. "By my life and by my honour, there is not a doubt or an apprehension in my mind that these few hands which you see around you are quite sufficient to scatter yon base rabble to the winds of heaven, and give their carcasses to the ravens. Some two miles hence, I have seen a sight which has filled my spirit with a fire that burns for the destruction of these men, who have not only cast off a yoke which was perhaps a heavy one, but have cast off also every feeling of humanity, and by deeds of blood and horror, and infernally devised cruelty, have shown themselves unworthy of any state but that against which they have risen. — But who have we here ?"

"My Lord of Chamblé," said the Count of Foix, who had been speaking to the Duchess

of Orleans, and now advanced toward the gentleman who approached, “ how goes it with you ? But badly, I fear. However, we have come to give you help, and we will soon, please God and our Lady, set this affair to rights.”

The tone of confidence in which the capital and the Count of Foix spoke, as well as the very fact of receiving assistance at all, at a moment when it seemed beyond all expectation, had restored, in some degree, lost hope and comfort to the breasts of the ladies of France ; but such was not the effect upon the young Lord of Chamblé, when he beheld the scanty numbers which followed the two leaders, and remembered the immense multitude he had lately had before his eyes.

“ There may now be some chance, my lord,” he said, “ of repelling these villains, and defending the place ; for even your small force will enable us to man the walls, and to repair what evil is done to the gates ; but as for deliverance, I fear we must wait till the regent arrives.”

“ Small force !” exclaimed the Count of Foix,

with the water of the river, but we will soon dry them in the fire of the battle. Ladies fair, if we deliver you this day, as we trust right certainly to do, I pray you remember, whether I live or fall, it is to this young gentleman here present, as much as any one, that you owe your safety."

"I, for one, do owe him much already, my lord," said a pale but beautiful girl, taking a step forward. "He generously tried to save my dying father, when delay might have been worse than death to himself. But that father, noble captal, commanded me strictly, the very first moment I could gain speech with you, to give you this packet, and beg you to see right done. I will explain hereafter every thing concerning it, but I must not fail to obey his words. Here is the packet."

The captal took it, saying, with a smile, "I must not stay to read it now, fair lady, for there are some skilful hands plying a mangonel against the gates, I hear. — Lo ! here are the horses. — Cousin, take you your choice : — the grey ? — well, give me the black one then.

Brace up those girths tighter, good youth — how the brute plunges! — he has not been forth for many a day. We will take down that fire before we have done. — Albert, you shall be my squire, and win the spurs you talked of. — Mauleon, come you on the other side. — Cousin of Foix, let us make our front as wide as the gate will admit. Bring down any men-at-arms that can be had from the tower, and let the varlets twang the bow-string eagerly upon the enemy till we be past the bridge. — Fair ladies, adieu. Close well the gates behind us, and then watch us from the walls. Your bright eyes will give us a thousand hearts. — Down with your vizor, Albert!"

"I would fain that he should know me, my lord," replied Albert Denyn.

"Ha!" said the capital — "Well, as you will. Now let our trumpet sound to the charge. — Open the doors, and on them!"

The gates of the market-place were suddenly thrown back; and through the archway might be seen the line of the bridge over the Marne with but very few men upon it; but beyond it

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appeared a sea of fierce and furious faces, turned up towards the walls from the large open space on the other side of the river. A great part of the multitude were but rudely armed, with pikes, or bills, or scythes ; but amongst them, too, were men covered from head to foot with armour ; and banners and standards were likewise displayed in their ranks, whilst in the midst, the huge mangonel was seen, in the act of heaving another immense stone into the air.

“ Halt !” cried the captal, “ halt ! till it has fallen. — Now on them ! — charge ! — Greilly to the rescue ! St. George for merry England ! ”

“ Foix ! Foix ! St. Michael and St. George ! St. Michael and St. George ! ” cried the Count of Foix ; and, dashing their spurs into their horses’ flanks, they galloped through the archway, the proud beasts that bore them, full of food and rest, plunging fiercely as if to escape from the rein.

The news of a reinforcement having thrown itself into the market-place had reached the multitudes of the Jacquerie, a few minutes

before, and had somewhat shaken their confidence; but when they saw the gates thrown open, and banners and spears coming forth, many a heart, not knowing the scanty numbers of their adversaries, began to quail, ere the first horsemen were upon the bridge.

A movement of flight instantly took place. In vain Caillet tried to rally the multitude; in vain the Parisians, and a number of his own determined followers, made a fierce stand to oppose the passage of the fugitives. As man after man poured forth from the narrow archway and thundered along the bridge, and as the arrows from the gate fell amongst them, wounding many and killing one or two, the effort for flight became general, and every street leading from the bridge was jammed up with people.

Mad, furious, and despairing, Caillet seized a crossbow from one of the men near him, saying, "I will show you how to treat the vipers," and aiming a quarrel at the Capital de Buch he loosed the string. The missile flew off with a hissing sound, but the pressure

of the people had shaken the marksman's aim. The captal rode on unharmed, piercing at the very moment the back of one of the fugitives with his keen lance ; but the Lord of Chamblé wavered in the saddle, dropped the reins, fell, and was dragged by a page from under the horse's feet.

The young noble uttered no sound ; but the man whom the captal transfixed with his lance gave a sudden yell of agony that spread new consternation amongst the people. Caillet, Jacques Morne, Vaillant, Soulard, and the rest, were borne away in spite of all their efforts ; and urging on their horses fiercely through the streets, the men-at-arms, some with their lances, and some with their long swords, pierced, and cut down, or trampled under foot, the immense multitude which had so lately been attacking the fortified market-place of Meaux, but who, now smitten with an inconceivable panic, fled before less than a score and a half of men. They pressed each other to death in the narrow streets, trod upon every one that fell without mercy, and at once, terrifying and

slaying each other, issued forth into the fields and meadows round Meaux, fleeing in every direction but fleeing in vain. Wherever they turned, wherever a group gathered together, there the fierce hand of the pursuers was upon them, hewing them down without mercy, and giving no ear to the cries and entreaties of those who had never listened to pity in their own hour of power.

From seven o'clock in the morning till nearly three in the afternoon, the band of the Capital de Buch and the Count of Foix continued to slay the Jacques and their accomplices; and however marvellous it may appear, no fact of history is more clearly ascertained than that, either pressed to death in the narrow streets, or killed by the sword in the city and the fields around, seven thousand men died in that day before the efforts of less than forty.

Very early in the fight, or rather slaughter, the little band of the capital and the Count of Foix had divided into five separate parties; and when, about three o'clock, the former planted his banner upon a small hill, and

looked over the plains around, he could see his horsemen wheeling hither and thither, but no body of the insurgents was to be distinguished in any direction.

He ordered his trumpet then to sound a recall ; and he was shortly after rejoined by the Count of Foix, who sprang from his horse and cast himself down upon the turf, saying, “ On my life, captal, though I have seen many hard-fought days, and hunted many a wild beast from morning until nightfall, I never remember having been so weary in all my life. Why, till the last hour, my arm has not ceased slaying for a minute. Never let them talk of Samson after this day’s work. I wish my sword had been the jaw-bone of an ass, it would have been easier wielded. How many thousand did you kill, captal ?— Ho ! Raoul, take off my casque, and let me have a little air.”

“ I slew till I was sick of the bloody work,” replied the captal. “ It was mere butchery ; and, on my life, I think I should have sheathed my sword and let them go free, had not the tale of that poor dying wretch we found last night —

how that they had roasted her husband's body before her eyes and made her eat him — rung in my ears, and rendered me as merciless as the north-east wind. I have no taste for killing sheep."

"Nor I either," answered the Count of Foix; and, to say truth, I had but one fair stroke or two with any man — one of the Parisian fellows, I imagine, who, finding me close upon him, turned and aimed a blow at my thigh. He had good arms, for my lance broke on his plastron, and it took me two good thrusts of my sword, which is heavy enough, to end him."

"Albert Denyn had the best of the day, my lords," said Mauleon, joining in; "for he attached himself to the man in the black armour, who was worth the whole of the rest of them put together. Albert touched no one else but him, except when people came between them, and then he cut his way through, as a ship cleaves the sea."

"That was Caillet!" exclaimed the Capital de Buch: "that was their leader. Albert vowed himself to his destruction. — Did he kill him?"

“ Not that I saw, my lord,” replied Mauleon. “ Just out of the town gates, that fellow, and four or five others who were with him, found horses; but there the black armour turned upon Albert, and they had two or three stout blows together. Then the other put the spur to his horse and galloped, and Albert after him. More than once they came to blows; for, ever and anon, the black armour faced round upon his pursuer, sometimes alone, sometimes with two others; but still Albert made his part good; for I saw him cleave one of them, who had no head-piece, down to the very jaws, and then wheel upon the others again. After that, I followed you, my lord, and saw no more.”

“ Let the trumpet sound ! ” said the captal : “ they are coming in but slowly.”

“ They are weary to death, I dare say,” replied the Count of Foix ; “ but let us be riding back towards Meaux, there will be bright eyes looking out for us.—I think we have lost none of our number, but one who was shot by a quarrel on the bridge. Who was he ? I saw some one fall, but did not mark who it was.”

"It was the young gentleman we found in the place, my lord," answered one of the men-at-arms. "Monsieur de Chamblé, I think they called him."

"Indeed!" cried the count. "Poor fellow! Was he killed?"

"As dead as a roebuck," replied the man. "He was raising his vizor just at the moment, and it went into his forehead."

"Well, some one must be killed," said the count; and with this brief elegy the subject was dismissed.

The Count of Foix mounted his horse again, and, with their trumpet sounding, he and the captal took their way back towards Meaux. As they rode on, party after party came in and joined them; and before they reached the gates of the city, no one was wanting but one or two pages and varlets, who were known to have returned to the market-place with some prisoners, the young Lord of Chamblé, and Albert Denyn.

An unexpected obstacle, however, presented itself under the very walls. Some of the citizens

appeared upon the battlements and threatened to keep the gates closed, unless a promise of amnesty was given for the part that the people of Meaux had taken. The cheek of the capitai turned very red; but the Count of Foix, remarking that the great valves of the gate did not seem fully closed, spurred forward, and pushed them hard with his hand.

The door gave way, in spite of some resistance that was made. The men-at-arms rushed in, and were joined by a part of the citizens, crying, “Down with the traitors! Down with the traitors! Long live the dauphin! Long live the dauphin!” and in a moment the scene of strife was renewed in the streets of the city.

Worsted, but desperate, some of the mayor’s party fled into the houses, and opened a discharge of arrows and quarrels from the windows, drawing down a bitter retribution on their own heads.

“Out upon the traitorous hounds!” exclaimed the Captal de Buch.

“Burn them out!” cried the Count of Foix.

The suggestion was too rapidly adopted—fire was brought; and ere an hour was over, one half of the town of Meaux was in flames. In one of the houses was taken John Soulard, the treacherous mayor; and some of the other citizens would have put him to death at once for the evils that he had brought upon the city: but the capital and the Count of Foix interfered, and, tying him hand and foot, had him carried with them into the market-place, to await the judgment of the dauphin.

In the midst of that small square, where, not many hours before, they had stood expecting death with all the most aggravating circumstances, the ladies of France were now collected to welcome the little band of their gallant deliverers. Two by two, as they passed the gate, the nobles and their men-at-arms, leaving their exhausted horses panting in the shade, advanced to meet the gratulations that poured upon them.

All was joy and satisfaction in every bosom, but one, there present. Adela de Mauvinet, however, gazed over the band as they ad-

vanced, and searched amongst them, with an eager and an anxious eye, for the one being most dear to her own heart. She saw him not: she counted them over again and again. He was not there; and as she stood by the side of the Duchess of Orleans, who was pouring forth thanks with an eloquent voice, Adela sunk slowly down, and was caught in the arms of the young lady of St. Leu, hearing not the words which the latter addressed to her, “He is safe — I am sure he is safe !”

CHAP. XIII.

WE must now not only change the scene to a camp, at some distance from Meaux, but pass over, at once, seven days in the course of our history.

In the centre of the long rows of canvass streets, was a large open space before a royal pavilion, with the standard of France upon the right-hand, and another banner upon the left. On either side appeared a long rank of men-at-arms; and the curtain of the tent drawn up, displayed a young, and somewhat pallid, man, seated in a large chair of state; while round about him, and back to the very crimson hangings behind, appeared a crowd of noblemen and gentlemen, for the most part armed completely except the head.

Placed in a somewhat lower chair, by the side of the principal personage, was the young Duchess of Normandy, and next to her, again, the Duchess of Orleans. A number of ladies

stood behind and around them ; and though all, more or less, were dressed with such splendour as befits a court, it was sad to see that many were in the weeds of mourning.

On the right of the dauphin, a little in advance, was a group composed of the most distinguished men in France, and amongst them were to be seen the Count of Foix, the Bégue de Vilaine, the Captal de Buch, and the old Lord of Mauvinet — last, as the poet says, but not least, for he was standing next to the prince himself, with his arms crossed upon his chest, his grey hair escaping from under his velvet cap, and his eyes bent thoughtfully, but not sadly, upon the ground.

Near the Duchess of Orleans appeared Adela de Mauvinet, somewhat pale, but with a fluttering colour upon her cheek, which came and went at almost every word ; and though her eyes were generally bent on the ground, yet, from time to time, she raised them to a considerable group of persons who had been brought into the presence of the regent by two heralds. One of the party had been speaking

to the Duke of Normandy for a considerable time; and when he came to the end of their communication, the prince bowed his head, saying, “Monsieur de Picquigny, greet well, for us, our noble cousin of Navarre, and tell him that there is nothing we desire more than peace with him and all the world. As soon as he gives us such proof and assurance of his good intentions towards ourselves, as may prove satisfactory to us, and to our council, we will gladly believe his professions, sheath the sword, and take him to our bosom with brotherly love. In the mean time, we readily consent to meet him at our father’s royal mansion at St. Ouen, and pledge him our word, in presence of these noble gentlemen, that he shall be safe in person, and have liberty to come and go, without stop or hinderance, for two days before and after our interview. Let him name the day.”

“I humbly thank your highness,” said the personage who had spoken on behalf of the King of Navarre; “and I beg to present to you, according to your desire, the young gentleman, who, with his own hand, took that traitorous

villain, William Caillet, after pursuing him for two days, in the fields near Clermont. I myself it was who found him bleeding and exhausted, and demanded his prisoner at his hands on behalf of the King of Navarre."

"And so the king struck off his head," added the dauphin — "it was too much honour for a villain like that. He should have hanged him to a tree. However, we thank the noble king for the good service he has rendered France, for exterminating the remainder of these Jacques near Clermont. — Young gentleman, stand forward: I find that you have done right well, and gallantly; but tell me something more of the means by which you accomplished what has foiled so many experienced knights. How did you contrive to take this villain?"

"I pursued him, your highness," replied Albert Denyn, "from Meaux to Nanteuil, and there lost sight of him during the night. But I knew he could not go far, for he had often turned upon me, and was badly wounded. The other man who was with him was wounded too, — one I killed under the walls of Meaux. At

day-break, however, after sleeping in the fields, I caught sight of them again, pursued, and overtook them beyond Senlis. There they turned again ; and after a few strokes, Caillet's companion, Morne, was killed. The two who remained alive were both much hurt, and had lost some blood ; but though he was weaker and had suffered more, he would have continued the fight ; but some horsemen appeared afar off, and he fled again. I pursued once more, but my horse was weary, and could hardly carry me farther, when, after a long chase, I found my enemy dropped from his beast, unable to go farther. We had been friends in boyhood ; and I could not kill him in cold blood. So I bound him and gave him up to Monsieur de Picquigny who followed."

" And for the capture of this notorious malefactor what do you claim as your reward ? " demanded the regent. " Knighthood, doubtless, so kneel down."

Albert Denyn knelt at the feet of the prince, with his face glowing up to the very brow, on which were the scars of more than one fresh

wound. Ere he could answer, however, the Duchess of Orleans rose, and laying her hand playfully on the string of pearls which Albert wore, twisted through the gold chain round his neck, she said, “By this sign and token, I redeem my promise.—Charles, your highness must seek some other recompence: I promised, that if he bore this trinket through the hosts of the Jacquerie to demand knighthood for him of yourself, or of any other knight, who, for my love and his merit, would bestow it.”

“Well, then,” replied the dauphin, “I grant it to your suit, fair lady, and dub him even now. He shall buckle on the spurs hereafter. In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I dub thee knight;” and he laid his sword upon Albert Denyn’s shoulder; adding, “This is for that lady’s sake! What other guerdon do you demand of me for your good service done?”

Still, ere Albert could reply, he was again interrupted. The Captal de Buch stepped forward, saying, “Your highness promised, that, as soon as you had given an answer to the King of Navarre, you would grant me a boon.

I have yielded to a lady, but can yield to no one else."

"Well, what is it?" demanded the dauphin, looking round with a smile.

"I have told your highness," replied the captal.

"Oh, yes! I remember," said the dauphin. — "Know all men by these presents, that I revoke and annul the sentence of high treason which went forth against the Lord of Granville, some fourteen or fifteen years ago; restore to his heirs and race their honours, dignities, and possessions, of all kinds whatsoever, and pronounce the said sentence of no effect, and as if it never had been. — Let letters of abolition be drawn up," he added, turning to an officer behind. — "I perform this act, my lord captal, with the greater pleasure, as I myself can bear witness that my father erred, and that the noble gentleman he did to death was wholly innocent."

"I give your highness thanks," exclaimed the Count of Mauvinet, stepping forward; "for though we had not met for years before his death, he was my dearest friend."

“ I thank your highness, also,” said the young lady of St. Leu, “ for he was my poor mother’s brother.”

“ Well, now your boon, young gentleman ?” asked the dauphin : “ we must not keep you kneeling here all day.”

Albert Denyn turned first pale, and next red, and then rising from his knee, bowed low, and took a step back.

“ I have none to ask, your highness,” he replied — “ I have obtained more than I either expected or asked. There is but one thing farther, in all the earth, that I could desire ; but it is so much beyond all hope, as well as beyond my worthiness, that I might be well accused of daring presumption, were I to dream of it. For an instant it may have crossed my mind, but I now banish it for ever, and I neither can nor will utter it to any one.”

“ Then I will for you,” said the Captal de Buch. — “ My Lord of Mauvinet, it is only you can give him his guerdon. The boon he would ask, if he dared, is this lady’s fair hand,” and crossing over, he took that of Adela in his

She trembled violently; and the Count de Mauvinet stood silent, with no expression of surprise on his countenance, but with a flushed cheek, a downcast eye, a quivering lip, and all those signs which may best denote a fierce mental struggle going on within.

“ My lord,” continued the Captal de Buch, “ remember all that this young man has been to her, all that he has done for her;—think that he has been as a brother in her infancy and youth; think that he has been her protector in his manhood; think that he has defended her honour and her life; think that he has spilt his blood as freely as if it had been water, to save her from death and shame! My lord, we know that many a born villein has won the hand of a noble lady by the mere force of riches— at least so says many an old song. Now, my lord, his riches are of a nobler kind than ever were brought to barter yet; and, moreover, he has been ennobled by the hand of the emperor, knighted by the hand of the regent — ”

“ Cease, my good lord, pray cease! It is in vain,” cried Albert Denyn: “ the original taint is there, and cannot be removed.”

But the Captal de Buch went on without heeding him. — “ Fair lady,” he said, turning to Adela, “ I know not well what are your feelings; and therefore to you, too, I will plead for my young friend. The time was, when no gift on earth I coveted so much as this fair hand. I thought it was a prize for which kings might strive: I deemed that few on the earth were worthy of it. Forgive me, lady, if I say that he is worthy, at least as much as any man can be, in services rendered, in noble deeds of arms, in generous courage, and in a lofty spirit. I, John de Greilly, have been held no mean judge of such things, and by my honour and my chivalry, I speak the truth when I say, that were you my own child, were you my own sister, I would give you to him. — What say you, my Lord of Mauvinet? Remember what he has done for your child, remember what he has done for you, and above all, remember what he has done for France. Then if you can lay your finger upon a nobler youth in all this presence, refuse him your daughter’s hand.”

“ But does he ask it?” inquired the Lord of Mauvinet.

“ I dare not ask it, my lord,” replied Albert Denyn. “ Were it possible for me to do so, I would dispute it with a world.”

“ Well !” said the old nobleman, at length—“ Well, Albert, one ought rightly to be assured that the blood is noble which is permitted to mingle with the race of Mauvinet. Nevertheless, you have indeed done things that may well prove you of gentle race. If my child loves you, I will not say you nay.—Adela, decide for youself, now and for ever. Your hand might be a boon for the highest and noblest in France; station, and rank, and honour, might well be yours—and may still be yours ! But if your heart tells you that he has won you well, if you can choose him, and never regret your choice, why, then, now let it be made.”

Adela sprang forward, knelt at her father’s feet, and held out her hand to Albert Denyn.

“ Out of all the world !” she exclaimed, with a burst of strong feeling that nothing could restrain—“ out of all the world ! Would that the emperor had not ennobled him!—would

that the sword of knighthood had never touched his shoulder! — that I might show him how noble I think him.” And hiding her eyes on her father’s coat of arms, she wept with mingled joy and agitation. But when she raised them again, and looked from her parent to her lover, the colour came somewhat into her cheek; for with a faint and sad smile the young lady of St. Leu came forward, and throwing her arm over Albert’s shoulder, kissed him on either cheek.

“ I give you joy!” she said, “ my noble cousin — I give you joy !”

A proud and meaning smile curled the lip of the Captal de Buch; but his was the only countenance there present which did not bear a strong expression of surprise.

“ What is the meaning of this?” exclaimed the old Lord of Mauvinet. “ Your cousin, lady? Have my dreams proved right? And is the orphan boy I educated——”

“ Albert Denyn, Count of Granville,” replied the young lady, “ and my dear cousin. It was to your abode, my lord, that he was

taken by my unhappy uncle Walleran, when the death of his elder brother, and the proscription of the whole race, drove him mad himself, and left the young heir destitute and in danger. He feared to tell you, it seems, who the child was, lest he should bring your house also into peril; he dared not carry him to my father, who was already suspected, from his connection with the house of Granville."

"But where is your uncle Walleran?" exclaimed the count. "I knew him well in former times: he was always wild and strange, but good at heart."

"Alas! my lord, he is dead," replied the Captal de Buch. "The brief history of the last year is this:—By a strange fate—for I must not venture to call it chance—my band was joined by Count Walleran de Granville as I was riding away from your castle of Mauvinet. His own nephew, not knowing him as his relation, pledged himself for his good faith. I soon discovered that the wild-looking man was not the being which he seemed; and when he found the station in which Albert was placed with me, he

revealed the whole secret, promising me the incontestible proofs of his nephew's birth and rank. These were to be given me at a little inn near St. Leu, where he proposed to leave us. There, however he suddenly disappeared, enticed away, it seems, during the night, by a fiend-like old man, named Thibalt de la Rue, and some accomplices. That old man had brought down death upon his brother, the Lord of Granville, whose servant he was, by a false accusation; and he now betrayed Count Walleran into the hands of William Caillet, who slew him for some old offence. Thibalt de la Rue, however, possessed himself of the papers which had been drawn up for me. I, in the mean time, had left behind Albert and some others to seek for Walleran: they found the body, and the Lord of St. Leu coming up, old Thibalt was arrested upon strong suspicion. The Lord of St. Leu turned him over to the Lord of Plessis, as his natural superior; but Monsieur de St. Leu's men searched him before delivering him up, and found the papers for which Albert Denyn had been inquiring, in my name. That noble gentleman kept them,

waiting for my return from Prussia; but intending to act strongly against the Jacques, and fearing that he might be killed in some encounter, the Lord of St. Leu gave those papers to his daughter, with directions to deliver them to me, that I might, when occasion served, assert her cousin's rights. Since his unfortunate death, she has placed them in my hands, and I have fulfilled the task. The ways of Providence are strange; and we often see a retributive justice in this world, as if directed immediately by God himself. I find that it was an arrow from the hand of Albert Denyn which smote the old fiend, who had betrayed his father and his uncle. His arm was it, also, that, after pursuing his uncle's murderer through two long days, delivered him up to justice, bound and overcome. — I have but one word more to say, and it is to you, lady," he continued, turning to Adela. " You heard me declare, I believe, when I entered the market-place at Meaux, that I would not have had another man with me to share in the honour of that day for half a kingdom. I believe, from my heart, that, with some-

what similar feelings, you would not have lost the opportunity of choosing this noble youth on account of his merit alone, for the brightest coronet that ever sat upon mortal brow; and, therefore, you will easily forgive me, that I kept the secret till your choice was made."

"Oh, my lord," exclaimed Adela, "how generous you are! Noble in every feeling, chivalrous in every act, your name shall long stand high upon the roll of renown *, and men shall point to the words, 'John de Greilly, Captal de Buch,' and say, 'That was a knight, indeed!'"

* It stands still in St. George's Hall at Windsor, amongst the first of those mighty champions, who are known by the title of "Founders of the Order of the Garter."

NOTE ON PAGE 288.

THE account given by Froissart of this adventure of the Captal de Buch and his companions is as follows. The reader will see that I have deviated very little from this account; and, even in the variations I have made, I am justified by other contemporary authors who have written on the subject:—

“En ce temps que ces méchants gens courroient, revinrent de Prusse le Comte de Foix et le Captal de Buch, son cousin; et entendirent sur le chemin, si comme ils devoient entrer en France, la pestilence et l’horriblité qui courroit sur le gentilshommes. Si en eurent ces deux seigneurs grand’ pitié. Si chevauchèrent par leur journées tant qu’ils vinrent à Châlons en Châmpagne, qui rien ne se mouvoit du fait des vilains, ni point n’y entroient. Si leur fut dit en la dite cité que la Duchesse de Normandie et la Duchesse d’Orleans, et bien trois cents dames et damoiselles, et le Duc d’Orleans aussi, étoient à Meaux en Brie, en grand meschef de cœur, pour cette Jaquerie. Ces deux bons chevaliers s’accordèrent que ils iroient voir les dames et les reconforteroient à leur pouvoir, combien que le captal fut Anglois. Mais ils étoient pour ce temps trèves entre le royaume de France et le royaume d’Angleterre; si pouvoit bien le dit captal chevaucher partout; et aussi là il vouloit remontrer sa

gentillesse, en la compagnie du Comte de Foix. Si pouvoient être de leur route environ quarante lances, et non plus ; car ils venoient d'un pélerinage, ainsi que je vous ai jà dit.

Tant chevauchèrent que ils vinrent à Meaux en Brie. Si allèrent tantôt devers la Duchesse de Normandie et les autres dames, qui furent moult liées de leur venue ; car tous les jours elles étoient menacées des Jacques et des vilains de Brie, et mêmement de ceux de la ville, ainsi qu'il fut apparent. Car encore pour ce que ces méchants gens entendirent que il avoit là foison de dames et de damoiselles et de jeunes gentils enfants, ils s'assemblèrent ensemble, et ceux de la Comté de Valois aussi, et s'envinrent devers Meaux. D'autre part, ceux de Paris, qui bien savoient cette assemblée, se partirent un jour de Paris, par flottes et par troupeaux, et s'envinrent avecques les autres. Et furent bien neuf mille tous ensemble, en très grand' volonté de mal faire. Et toujours leur croissoient gens de divers lieux et de plusieurs chemins qui se raccordoient à Meaux. Et s'envinrent jusques aux portes de la dite ville. Et ces méchants gens de la ville ne voulurent contredire l'entrée à ceux de Paris, mais ouvrirent leur portes. Si entrèrent au bourg si grand' plenté que toutes les rues en étoient convertes jusques au marché. * * *

“ Quand ces nobles dames, qui étoient herbergées au marché de Meaux, qui est assez fort, mais qu'il soit gardé et défendu, car la rivière de Marne l'avironne, virent si grand' quantité de gens accourir et venir sur elles, si furent moult ébahies et effrayées ; mais le Comte de Foix et le Captal de

Buch, et leur routes, qui jà étoient tous armés, se rangèrent sur le marché, et vinrent à la porte du marché, et firent ouvrir tout arrière; et puis se mirent au devant de ces vilains, noirs et petits, et très mal armés, et la bannière du Comte de Foix et celle du Duc d'Orleans, et le pennon du captal, et les glaives et les épées en leur mains, et bien appareillés d'eux défendre et de garder le marché. Quand ces méchants gens les virent ainsi ordonnés, combien qu'ils n'étoient mie grand' foison encontre eux, si ne furent mie, si forcennés que devant; mais se commencèrent les premiers à reculer, et les gentilhommes à eux poursuivre, et à lancer sur eux de leurs lances et de leurs épées, et eux abattre. Adonc, ceux qui étoient devant et qui sentoient les horions, ou qui les redoutoient à avoir, reculoiient de hideur, tant à une fois qu'ils chéoient l'un sur autre. Adonc issirent toutes manières de gens d'armes hors des barrières, et gagnèrent tantôt la place, et se boutèrent entre ces méchants gens. Si les abatoient à grands monceaux, et tuoient ainsi que bêtes; et les reboutirent tous hors de la ville que onques en nul d'eux n'y eut ordonnance ni conroy; et en tuèrent tant qu'ils en étoient tous lassés et tannés; et les faisoient saillir en la rivière de Marne. Finalement, ils en tuèrent ce jour et mirent à fin plus de sept mille: ni jà n'en fut nul échappé, si ils les eussent voulu chasser plus avant. Et quand les gentilshommes retournèrent, ils boutèrent le feu en la desordonnée ville de Meaux, et l'ardirent toute, et tous les vilains du bourg qu'ils purent dedans enclorre."

In another place, however, Froissart gives an

account of an interview he had with Bassot de Mauleon, mentioned in the text, in which the captal's companion informed him that the ladies of France were totally alone in the market-place, and that the number of Jacques killed was six thousand. Another author greatly reduces the number of the companions of the Count de Foix and the Captal de Buch. By this last authority, also, we find that only one of the gentlemen who issued forth from the market-place was killed upon this occasion. The name, however, is by him written Chamby.

The description of the market-place of Meaux, as I have given it in the text, is, I believe, a complete picture of what it was at that time ; at least I am led to suppose so, from the statements of Monsieur de Secousse, who took infinite pains to ascertain the facts. It may be remarked, also, that many other places mentioned in this work have changed in appearance as much as Meaux ; cities having grown up round castles, which then stood naked on the hill side, or at most had a small village of peasant's huts attached to them.

THE END.

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